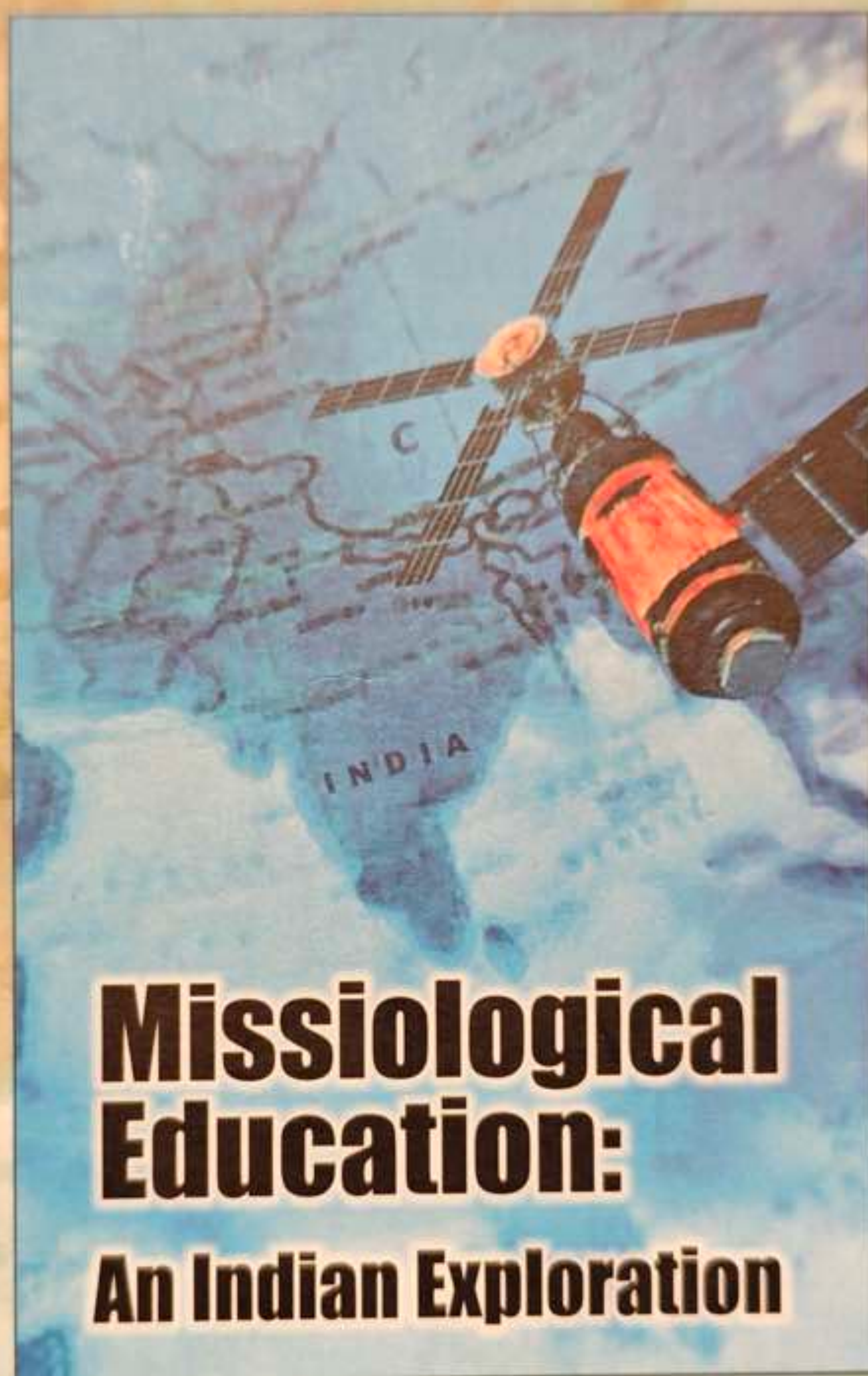


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Studies in the Gospel Interface with Indian Contexts



Missiological Education: An Indian Exploration

Siga Arles



CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

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Abbreviations

ABS	Allahabad Bible Seminary
ACA	Asian Christian Academy, Bangalore
ACTC	Andhra Christian Theological College, Secunderabad
ACTS	Association of Christian Theological Students
AEAM	Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar
AETEI	Association for Evangelical Theological Education in India
AICOESA	All India Conference on Evangelical Social Action
AICOEW	All India Conference of Evangelical Women
AICOME	All India Congress on Mission and Evangelism
AJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>
ATA	Asia Theological Association
ATESEA	Association for Theological Education in South East Asia
ATTI	Association of Theological Teachers in India
ATTWI	Association of Theologically Trained Women in India
BCM	Bible Club Movement
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
BSI	Bible Society of India
BTE	Board of Theological Education
BTESSC	Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College
BTF	<i>Bangalore Theological Forum</i>
CASA	Churches' Auxiliary for Social Action
CBCI	Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
CCA	Christian Council of Asia
CCC	Christian Counselling Centre, Vellore
CD	<i>Current Dialogue</i>
CEEFI	Christian Education Department of the Evangelical Fellowship of India
CEF	Child Evangelism Fellowship
CHAI	Church History Association of India
CISRS	Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
CISS	Christian Institute for the Study of Society
CLS	Christian Literature Society
CLSC	Committee for Literature on Social Concern
CMR	<i>Church Missionary Review</i> (of CMS)
CMS	Church Missionary Society

CNI	Church of North India
COWE	Consultation on World Evangelization
CRESR	Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility
CSI	Church of South India
CSL	Christian Students Library
CSV	Christu Seva Vidyalyaya
CUP	Cambridge University Press
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
EACC	East Asia Christian Council
EAJT	<i>East Asia Journal of Theology</i>
ECC	Ecumenical Christian Centre
EFI	Evangelical Fellowship of India
EFICOR	Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief
EFI-SC	EFI Study Commission
EFI-TC	EFI Theological Commission
EHC	Every Home Crusade
ELS	Evangelical Literature Society
ELFI	Evangelical Literature Fellowship of India
EMQ	<i>Evangelical Missions Quarterly</i>
EPH	Edinburgh Publishing House
EQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ER	<i>Ecumenical Review</i>
ERT	<i>Evangelical Review of Theology</i>
ETS	Evangelical Theological Society
ETSF	Evangelical Theological Students' Fellowship
FECI	Federation of Evangelical Churches of India
FERES	Federation Internationale des Instituts de Recherches Sociales et Socio-Religieuses
FMPB	Friends Missionary Prayer Band
EW	<i>The East and the West / The East and West Review</i>
GLS	Gospel Literature Society
GLTC&RI	Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute
HBI	Hindustan Bible Institute
IAMS	International Association of Mission Studies
IBMR	International Bulletin of Missionary Research
ICHR	<i>Indian Church History Review</i>
ICOWE	International Congress on World Evangelization
ICPCHE	International Council for Promotion of Christian Higher Education

ICSA	Inter-Church Service Agency, Madras
IEM	Indian Evangelical Mission
IFES	International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
IJT	<i>Indian Journal of Theology</i>
IMA	India Missions Association
IMC	International Missionary Council
IMR	<i>Indian Missionary Review</i>
IMS	Indian Missionary Society
IRM	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
ISPCK	Indian Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
ITS	<i>Indian Theological Studies</i>
	Industrial Team Service
IVP	Inter-Varsity Press
JAAS	<i>Journal of African and Asian Studies</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
KCD	Karnataka Central Diocese
KGF	Kolar Gold Fields, Karnataka
LMS	London Missionary Society
LOP	Lausanne Occasional Papers
LPH	Lucknow Publishing House
LTC	Leonard Theological College
MARC	Missions Advanced Research Centre, Monrovia, CA, USA
MBS	Madras Bible Seminary
MF	Ministerial Formation
MSS	Masihi Sahitya Sanstha
NBCLC	National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre
NCC	National Christian Council
NCCI	National Christian Council of India
NCCR	<i>National Christian Council Review</i>
NMS	National Missionary Society
OMSC	Overseas Ministry Study Centre, New Haven, CT, USA
OUP	Oxford University Press
PIM-A	Partnership in Mission - Asia
PTE	Programme on Theological Education
PUP	Princeton University Press
RS	<i>Religion and Society</i>
RTI	Rural Theological Institute (of TTS, Madurai)

SABC	Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore
SACC	Southern Asia Christian College, Madras
SAIACS	South Asian Institute for Advance Christian Studies, Bangalore
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SEAJT	<i>South East Asia Journal of Theology</i>
SIBS	South India Biblical Seminary
SIC	<i>The South India Churchman</i>
SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SU	Scripture Union
TAFTEE	The Association for Theological Education by Extension, Bangalore
TECCA	Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action, Madurai
TEF	Theological Education Fund
TRACI	Theological Research and Communication Institute, Delhi
TTS	Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai
UBS	Union Biblical Seminary, Pune
UELICI	United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India
UESI	Union of Evangelical Students of India
UIRM	Urban Industrial Rural Mission
UTC	United Theological College, Bangalore
VBS	Vacation Bible School
WACC	World Association of Christian Communication
WCSRS	William Carey Study and Research Centre
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WEF-TC	WEF Theological Commission
WMC	World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation
WVI	World Vision of India
YFC	Youth for Christ
YWAM	Youth with a Mission
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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Missiological education of a relevant sort for India's need - this has become my passion, call and commitment through the years of my involvement in theological education. I am grateful that John RW Stott of the Langham Trust sponsored my doctoral study at the University of Aberdeen under the supervision of Professor Andrew Walls during the eighties. My research and writing was published by Verlag Peter Lang in their Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity in 1991. This work remained inaccessible in India.

I am thankful that the Centre for Contemporary Christianity has now included it in its series on Studies in the Gospel Interface with Indian Contexts. The credit goes to HL Richard for his untiring work, support and encouragement in seeing this Indian edition completed.

I dedicate this book to all those who are attempting to live and interpret the good news of Jesus Christ in the Indian setting, with the hope that their journey will be enriched and renewed through the insights of this work. I acknowledge the partnership of my wife, Nalini Arles (herself a professor of pastoral care and counselling), and the joy of my sons Naveen and Sandesh, who keep me young.

Furthering what is in this volume, many researchers should investigate to discover more effective ways of authenticating the gospel for the masses of India into the future. I invite you to join hands and make our journey productive and thus to bring honour and glory to God.

Siga Arles
Bangalore

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Preface

The significance of theological education for the mission of the church gripped me quite early in life. While a student of biology at my home town Kolar Gold Field First Grade College, I was disillusioned with the nominal Christianity that I found in my church. Attracted by the vibrant testimonies of theological students at nearby South India Biblical Seminary, I experienced Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord. Frustration at the status of the church in my local setting led me to perceive that "to renew the church we need a renewed minister." After graduation, my link with South India Biblical Seminary as a staff member in its literature department led me to realise that the renewal of the minister is rooted in his theological orientation during his ministerial training. Hence to become a theological educator and produce the right sort of ministers became a great desire in my youthful heart. I was twenty-five when, equipped with two theological degrees obtained from Asbury Theological Seminary, USA, I became a theological educator at South India Biblical Seminary. The period spent in teaching made me aware of the complexities of ministry, the factions in the church and the confusion that prevailed on the mission of the church. My motivation to study the development of the mission of the church in independent India was aroused by many seminars, consultations and conferences that I participated in.

Though this desire was in me, when applying for post-graduate studies I listed cultural anthropology as the area of my interest. But once into the research, Professor Walls identified my interest and guided me to search into historical material to widen my understanding of the church in India, her history and her indigenous developments. It was like another conversion experience for me to move from being in the seclusion of a small camp within the church to discover the whole church and to learn from the whole church's experiences. I began, I enjoyed and felt a great mental stimulation. But I felt the least educated after a three year period. There was so much more to read and understand! But it was time to submit the theses. When I rushed into writing in the fourth year, I was

called back to India. Responsibilities hindered the writing process. After a break of two years, it was very much a fresh start at writing, which is now presented in this book.

Part I attempts to cover pre-independence developments in mission, ministry and theological education, commenting on the structures for theological education that developed such as the Serampore College and the United Theological College; the structures that developed to coordinate the churches in India such as the National Christian Council, the significance of national independence and church unity and of the studies by the Lindsay Commission and Charles Ranson.

Part II deals with the developments in Indian Christian theology and the theology of mission under the influence of indigenous theologians such as PD Devanandan, MM Thomas, the group of thinkers in the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the Ecumenical Christian Centre, especially in terms of the context of religious pluralism and poverty in India. It also notes the cause and concern of the polarising tendency of the conservative evangelicals.

Part III studies the changing image of ministry itself and identifies the developments in ministry, formation of indigenous mission societies and parachurch ministries.

Part IV journeys through select events and ventures that made significant contributions to lead the ministry and theological education into relevant understanding of mission in India. It studies the Harrison Report on Theological Education in India, the attempts to develop co-operation through the Board of Theological Education, the forming of one national structure for theological education in the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, and the national study of priorities in theological education.

This then is seen in Part V from within a church scene by studying developments in the Church of South India and the development in relevance to the context in Indian theological education as illustrated by a study of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary.

In this first print in an Indian edition of my doctoral thesis, I stop with 1987. A brief statement is given as an epilogue to summarise major developments from 1987 to 2005. But a future work has to cover the later developments.

The thesis concludes attesting that there is definite growth in relevance in Indian theological education, shaped both by lay and professional forces which are kept in unnecessary tension by forces from outside India.

PART ONE

Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

Mission, Ministry and Theological Education in Pre-Independence India

The church in India, as part of the universal church, goes through her own travails in articulating her understanding of her mission and her ministry within her particular socio-economic, political and religious context. "Mission" identifies the goal and purpose of the church in a given setting; "ministry" distinguishes the methods and modes used in order to accomplish those goals and purposes. A consistent rethinking of those goals, purposes, methods and modes in relation to one's context is necessary if the church is to remain relevant. It is first the task of "theologians" to rethink and articulate these factors in every age and it is then the responsibility of the "theological educators" to teach every new generation of Christian ministers the relevant "understanding(s)" of the mission of the Church and to train them both for their ministry to the church and for their task of equipping the church for her ministry to the world. "Church" here is used not in its strictly institutional sense, but as "the people of God." "Understanding" may never be a rigidly singular entity in the increasingly pluralistic modern world, where plural conceptions demand equal right of existence in every sphere of life.

This thesis emerges as a result of the author's pursuit to understand the way Indian Christians have interpreted the mission of the church in India, the way ministries were developed for the accomplishment of that mission and the way theological educators and theological colleges coped with the whole process of training a relevant ministry. The study, set within the post-democratic period, is too close to the present and hence suffers its limitations. Contemporary ferment in theological thought and articulation in India is manifold and kaleidoscopic. This study confines itself to developments in selected main streams within the Protestant churches in the post-Independence decades, taking note of the unfortunate parallelism and polarisation of the "ecumenical" and "evangelical" divide. The thesis ventures to show them as necessary strands of the very same mission of God.

Since it is necessary to get a glimpse of the church, her understanding of mission and ministry and her theological educational institutions as they were in pre-Independence period, we shall first consider certain salient factors which provide a background for this study. We must consider eight such factors which influenced the understanding of the mission, ministry and theological education of the Protestant Churches during the first half of the twentieth century:

1. The Reorganization of Serampore College
2. The Establishment of the United Theological College, Bangalore
3. The Formation of the National Christian Council of India
4. The Lindsay Commission Report on Christian Higher Education
5. The Contribution of Tambaram 1938 to Theological Education
6. The Ranson Report on the Christian Minister in India
7. Significant Events of the Year 1947: I. National Independence
8. Significant Events of the Year 1947: II. Church Union

1. The Reorganization of Serampore College

Serampore College, started by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1818 and favoured with the Royal Charter issued by the King of Denmark in 1827, had the special place of a pioneer institution for theological education in India.¹ By the end of the nineteenth century, it had totally become a Baptist College.² The Royal Charter was in disuse and doubt was cast on its validity, though the treaty of transfer of the Danish settlement of Serampore to Great Britain in 1845 included the following clause at the Danish King's wish:

The rights and the immunities granted to Serampore College by the Royal Charter of date 23rd Feb. 1827, shall not be interfered with, but continue in force in the same manner as if they had been obtained by a charter from the British Government, subject to the general law of British India.³

1. For an account of the history of Serampore College, see George Howells, *The Story of Serampore and its College*, Serampore: College Council, 1927, pp 116; Wilma Stewart (ed.), *The Story of Serampore and its College*, Calcutta: The Council of Serampore College, 1960, pp 124. Since this thesis does not concern itself with the early beginnings of Christian missions or theological education in India, works dealing with Carey's time are not cited.

2. The theological work of Bishop's College also ceased to function by this time. The fundamentally right visions of the founders were perhaps too far fetched for Indian Christianity of the nineteenth century; see Howells' discussion of the Baptist Missionary Society's involvements at Serampore.

3. Howells, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

It was said, "The Serampore Charter is as dead as Queen Anne, any thought of its resurrection is an idle dream;" but it was not an idle dream for George Howells, the Baptist missionary principal of Serampore College.⁴ Armed with legal opinions secured both in India and England, he met the Baptist Missionary Society in England and persuaded them to revive the charter. Already from 1901, he wrote a series of papers and pamphlets – some of them published in papers and magazines of the day like *The Indian Evangelical Review* of Calcutta and the *Harvest Field* of Mysore – on theological education and Christian education in India, and brought the subject up for discussion before various Indian missionary conferences. His views included the following:

(1) Theological study should be pursued wholly or in part in an open institution and in conjunction with a liberal course of general culture; (2) The scientific study of Christian Theology and Biblical Literature after a sound preliminary course in literature, philosophy and science, should receive such academic recognition in India as it does in Western lands; (3) If the Government felt it undesirable from their view of the principles of religious neutrality to add a theological faculty to the existing universities, Serampore College should be organised as an Arts and Theological teaching institution of a high grade, and the Serampore College Charter utilized for the granting of degrees in theology to students of all churches.⁵

Howells expected Serampore College at once to "be a Protestant College of the Propaganda for the thorough equipment of missionaries," an arts and science college for general education, a teacher training college to prepare school masters, an Oriental institute for academic study and original work in Sanskrit, Arabic and Buddhistic sacred literature, a study centre for missionaries from all over India, a literature centre to produce Christian theological and general literature adapted to India, a library and reading room with a museum of interesting items. Modestly he stated:

I am not so optimistic as to think that such an idea can be realised at a stroke; but with Carey, I look upon its realisation as dependent on the gracious providence of God, and the generosity of the public

4. George Howells was sent to India in 1895 by the BMS and became the second founder of Serampore College a century after Carey. He became its principal in 1906 and served Serampore College for a total of 35 years. See DA Christdoss, "The Story of Serampore College" in Wilma Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp 35f and also pp 44f.

5. Howells, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

in India, Europe and America.⁶

Howells' proposals were received sympathetically in missionary circles. The Fourth Decennial Missionary Conference at Madras in 1902 studied the question and set up a committee to explore the possibility of an interdenominational senate or faculty of theology in consultation with the Council of Serampore College.⁷ The government of India commission which studied the issue concluded that it "was neither practicable nor expedient" to make provision for a faculty of theology. The larger proportion of missionary opinion seemed to favour the utilizing of the Serampore charter on university lines rather than establishing a faculty of theology in any of the existing universities.⁸

The committee set up by the Madras Decennial Missionary Conference of 1902 considered the possibility of an interdenominational senate which would only recommend courses of study, necessary regulations, examiners, etc., leaving the property, revenues and management of the college to the college council. Thus, with Howells' spade work on the one hand and the Decennial Missionary Conference Committee's proposal on the other, negotiations were opened, legal opinions sought and the renewal of the charter of Serampore College attempted with the government and the Baptist Missionary Society. Negotiations resulted in the opening of the higher theological department preparing for the B.D. degree in October 1910, the restarting of intermediate arts classes in affiliation with Calcutta University in 1911, repairs and expansion of the physical facilities and the reorganizing of the council.⁹ The first B.D. degrees were conferred in 1915. The Diploma of Licentiate in Theology was instituted in 1916. The reorganization process was completed by the passing of the Serampore College Act in 1918. As a result, an interdenominational senate was formed and the Baptist Missionary Society in 1925 agreed to accept financial responsibility for the college in spite of this reorganization on an interdenominational basis. The college became far more widely appreciated and acknowledged as an "educational Christian missionary and ecumenical college" rooted in the noble vision of the founders, "expecting and attempting still greater things."¹⁰

6. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

9. Howells explains the formation of the Senate and Council of the Serampore College and University extensively, *op. cit.*, p. 6 and Chapter VI. Cf. W Stewart, *op. cit.*, Chapter IV.

10. See Howells, *op. cit.*, pp 30f, 36f, 72.

One after the other theological colleges began to get affiliated with the Senate of Serampore College. United Theological College, Bangalore in 1919 at B.D. level, Pasumalai in 1919 at L.Th. level, Bishop's College, Calcutta in 1920 at B.D. level, the Arcot Theological Seminary, Vellore in 1922 at L.Th. level and the North India Theological College, Saharanpur in 1927 at B.D. level. These remained stationary through the following years of financial depression and war, and new affiliations were counter-balanced by withdrawals, compelled in most instances by financial stringency.¹¹ This was so until the International Missionary Conference of 1938 at Tambaram, when awareness of the key place of theological education was quickened and the National Christian Council of India undertook the notable survey of 1944 under the leadership of Charles W Ranson. The significance of this survey report, known as Ranson Report,¹² cannot be exaggerated. The significance of Serampore for theological education becomes clear as we note that by 1961 there were 21 theological colleges and seminaries affiliated with Serampore College, and in the eighties the number had reached up to twenty-nine.¹³ Serampore has contributed much to the development of Christian ministry in India by providing an umbrella structure as the degree granting authority. It attempts to unify the theological focus of the colleges with a common curriculum, provides for common theological research and interaction among educators and evaluates the colleges for excellence.

2. The Establishment of the United Theological College, Bangalore

The establishing of a mission college at Bangalore with the aim to train young men as students for the work of the ministry of the Christian Church, and for the other departments of labour, for propagating and defending the Gospel in the surrounding and adjacent countries¹⁴

was proposed as early as in 1826 by London Missionary Society missionaries Stephen Laidler and James Massie. Such idea of serving the whole of India and beyond was "too ambitious" for LMS directors to

11. W Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

12. Charles W Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, pp 317.

13. See Henry S Wilson, *Directory of Theological Schools in South Asia*, Bangalore: BTESSC, 1986.

14. Quoted by JR Chandran, "The First Fifty years of the College" in *Fifty Years of the United Theological College, Bangalore 1919-1969*, Bangalore: UTC, 1969.

accept.¹⁵ Seventy years later in 1896 another LMS missionary, Walter Joss, once again proposed a United Theological College to be located at Bangalore, "to be a first-rate theological school, serving more than one denomination and drawing on the resources of more than one church tradition."¹⁶ Between the years 1859 and 1892, though no less than 230 Christians graduated from Madras University, only 10 of those chose Christian ministry as their vocation and only 3 actually became ministers; others became teachers. An Indian minister the Rev. J Lazarus alluded this "shocking situation" to the fact that

There are no proper theological colleges. There are in some missions, schools or seminaries for the training of catechists or readers. To these graduates are naturally unwilling to go.¹⁷

When the editor of *Harvest Field* raised the question, "Why do not more Indian graduates enter the Christian ministry?"¹⁸ Lazarus responded in his book published in 1891 proposing the establishment of either theological chairs at Madras Christian College or an United Missionary College to enable graduates to see the dignity of the ministerial calling and to adequately prepare for it.¹⁹

The seed-thought of a "higher theological college" took root and eventually bore fruit when the Rev. Dr. James Duthie of LMS at Travancore invited representative missionaries from several missions to his home at Kodaikanal "to discuss an idea that had taken possession of his mind."²⁰ Present at the meeting were JI Macnair of LMS, John P. Jones of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,

15. Richard Lovett, *History of London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, London 1899, Vol. ii, p. 105.

16. N Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, Oxford 1954, p. 66.

17. Rev. H Gulliford, editor of *HF*, sought responses from a number of Indian nationals. Lazarus' article was the first of the series and one of the ablest. See *HF*, Vol. iv, 1892, pp 54f.

18. *Ibid.*

19. MH Harrison, a missionary of the American Board served UTC from 1931 to 1958. He reports his inability to secure a copy of this book or its exact title. See 1, October 1914, p. 12; *HF*, 1913, p. 202; and Kaj Baago, *A History of the National Christian Council of India, 1914-1964*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1965, p. 15.

20. Duthie, fertile in new and bold ideas, was at the time an old senior missionary of 70 whom others referred as the "youngest missionary" in South India. See Maclean, "The History of the College" in *The Bangalore UTC Magazine*, Silver Jubilee Issue, 4:1, October 1935, p. 37. Maclean was the last surviving member of the group which met at Duthie's place.

JH Wyckhoff of the American Arcot Mission and JH Maclean of the United Free Church of Scotland. Duthie shared with them his conviction:

However good had been the work done by existing seminaries, and however excellent the work they might still do, the time had come for something different to meet the growing needs of the Indian Church...increasing in number, in wealth and in education, and many congregations were no longer satisfied with a ministry of the type which had sufficed in past days.²¹

He emphasised the need for co-operation and joint action to enable men to study theology with a broader outlook and presented a scheme for the founding of a new college. That breakfast party on a June morning in 1906 at Kodaikanal agreed upon the plan. Since Duthie was soon to retire, Dr. JH Wyckhoff, a younger man, was asked to be responsible for carrying the proposal forward. In February 1907, representatives of five missions – London Missionary Society, American Arcot Mission, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and United Free Church of Scotland – met in Madras and planned further. Bangalore and Vellore were considered for the location of the new college. Bangalore was chosen partly because of its salubrious climate, "but mainly because of the facilities for the use of Kannada, Tamil and Telugu languages, [and] possibilities of work among English-educated classes..."²² With the willing support of the Home Boards, within four years plans were well ahead and the first council met in March 1910 at Bangalore and the college itself, the United Theological College, opened in July 1910 temporarily in the LMS seminary campus on Mission Road, using its library and other facilities.²³

The Rev. WH Campbell of LMS in the Telugu area was named the first principal. But due to his unexpected death before the college could open, the Council appointed J Mathers of YMCA to be the principal for a year. In 1911, Dr. LP Larsen²⁴ of the Danish Lutheran Missionary Society, "an excellent Tamil scholar, a thoughtful preacher, a well-read theologian

21. *Ibid.*, p. 38. See an unpublished paper by the author, "The Church in India: Its Ministerial Developments Until 1900," written during research in connection with this thesis, 1983.

22. JR Chandran, *op.cit.*, p. 100.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 101. Cf. Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, Penguin Books, 1966, p. 482.

24. For the life and thought of Larsen, see James M Gibbs, *LP Larsen: A Theology of Mission, Selected Works and Letters* including translations from his writings in Danish, historical essays and a bibliography of his writings, Bangalore: UTC, 1978, pp. 436.

and a man of God" with both rural and urban work experience in India, was appointed principal, to establish the college on the best and surest foundations and "to impress on the rising generation of Indian students the highest ideals of the ministry."²⁵ The search for relevance of Christian ministry in India had its beginnings in the work and leadership of Larsen when he served as principal of the United Theological College from 1911 to 1924.²⁶ When the present site was obtained in 1912, John Mott and WF Horton laid the foundation stones for the library and the chapel²⁷ indicating the Council's mind that "the college was designed to be an institution, in which, on the one hand, large opportunity would be given for private study and independent thinking, and on the other hand great stress would be laid on that devotional life which is essential to the equipment of efficient ministers of the new covenant."²⁸ The new campus was dedicated in April 1914 and the college was affiliated with Serampore for Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1919.²⁹

Though different heritages – Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist – came together in the United Theological College, yet so cordial was the spirit of mutual trust and goodwill among them that all agreed to unite with no other safeguard than was contained in the simple definition, the teaching of the college is based on the doctrines held in common by the Evangelical Churches of Christendom."³⁰

The hope expressed by WF Horton when he said, "This college will be of great service to Europe as an example of unity. Not only is this a united college in the sense that it brings different missions together. It must be united for the interests of theology and religion. The United Theological College is to be a uniter of our different denominations"³¹ was fulfilled, as affirmed by JH Maclean at the Silver Jubilee:

From that day to this no doctrinal dispute has disturbed the peace of the college, and all who have studied here are satisfied that what

25. Maclean, *op.cit.*, p. 40. Cf. Neill, *op.cit.*, p. 482.

26. Bishop Neill in his letter to the author, dated 22-12-1983.

27. Later named "The Gustav Warneck Library" and "The Ziegenbalg Chapel."

28. H. Sumitra who was in the first batch of students in 1910 and later became a Bishop of the CSI, wrote on the "First Day at UTC" in the *UTC Magazine*, Silver Jubilee Issue, 4:1, 1935, p. 41. Cf. Chandran, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

29. Chandran, *op. cit.*, p. 107. Cf. CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, p. 109; *Serampore College Handbook 1960-62*, Calcutta, p. 13.

30. Maclean, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

31. Chandran, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

they were taught was the essential doctrine of the Gospel preached by missionaries from Paul to Luther, Calvin and Wesley. It is only those not intimately connected with the college to whom its freedom from controversy appears surprising.³²

Bishop Whitehead's fear of the "Liberal theology of the Congregationalists" delayed the Anglican involvement in UTC until 1947 when the formation of the Church of South India "opened the way for wider co-operation."³³ Still the Anglican missionary societies, the Church Missionary Society and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, both appointed men such as VT Kurien in 1948, AG Widdess and LM Schiff in 1951, Bishop A Michael Hollis in 1955, and later, AT Hanson and EC John. Some of these were supported at UTC by non-Anglican funds.³⁴

The primary aim of UTC is the advanced theological training for the ordained ministry of the church.³⁵ From the first report of the college, Ranson quotes the purpose as:

The training of a higher grade of Indian evangelists, pastors and teachers who shall take their place in the growing Indian Church as able and worthy guides and leaders and developers of a rich Christian life and a strenuous Christian propaganda in this land.³⁶

In the first 25 years the college trained 147 students: 99 in full course, 27 in incomplete course and 21 in short courses, drawing them from 75 different places of India.³⁷ By 1960, at the Golden Jubilee, the college had a record of 481 graduates, 261 of whom took the college diploma, 196 took the Serampore B.D., and a few failed to qualify.³⁸

There were times when it was held that the training in the college was too advanced for the needs of the Indian church ... the requirements of the college have been beyond the abilities of the candidates who came.³⁹

A conference at Serampore in 1922 addressed this issue and felt that only a minority needed higher level training such as the B.D. degree.

32. Maclean, *o. cit.*, p. 38f.

33. Chandran, *op. cit.*, pp. 103 & 105.

34. HK Moulton, "A Slice of College History 1932-1957" in Golden Jubilee volume, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

35. Chandran, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

36. Ranson, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

37. UTC Silver Jubilee Issue, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

38. Chandran, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

Their proposal to have UTC as the only B.D. college for the nation was unacceptable to all the other B.D. colleges, such as Serampore and Bishop's at Calcutta, Leonard at Jabalpur, and the United Theological College at Saharanpur,⁴⁰ as the demand for degrees was felt acutely in the Indian setting. When regional vernacular B.D. colleges developed after the Ranson report, UTC was to play a specific role in higher education. Both the studies of Ranson and Harrison emphasised the need for scholarly and well-equipped theological teachers.⁴¹ UTC was destined to become a place for training theological teachers with higher post-graduate degrees at M.Th. and D.Th. levels.

UTC continued to remain a union institution, with staff and governing board members drawn from several evangelical churches⁴² and serving students of varied backgrounds. Since a vast majority of the theological teachers of all other colleges were trained at UTC, it had the strategic place of being the centre and capital for Indian theological education, though Serampore was the degree granting body.

3. The Formation of the National Christian Council of India

Simultaneous with the developments of the Senate of Serampore College and the United Theological College as important structures for co-operation in theological education in India, a third structure emerged to facilitate wider co-operation between the churches and missions themselves. This was the National Missionary Council (NMC), later named the National Christian Council of India (NCCI). It was formed at a National Conference which replaced the planned Decennial Missionary Conference in 1912, at Calcutta,⁴³ as a direct result of the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh 1910) and under the leadership of John Mott and JH Oldham. The National Missionary Councils were formed to continue the fervour for the unity of the church and united efforts in the mission of the church. National Missionary Council of India met first in 1914 and from then made progress and grew through its eight provincial councils in Bengal, Bihar-Orissa, Bombay, Punjab, Mid-India, Upper Provinces, Madras and Burma.⁴⁴ According to KS Latourette this was

40. *Ibid.*

41. The two reports are dealt with later in this book.

42. Ranson, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

43. See *Proceedings of the First Meeting of the National Missionary Council*, Calcutta, 1914; Cf. *Bulletin of the Madras Representative Council of Missions*, 1, October 1914, p. 12; HF, 1913, p. 202; and Kaj Baago, *A History of the National Christian Council of India, 1914-1964*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1965, p. 15.

44. Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 12f.

"the most comprehensive expression of co-operation."⁴⁵ It proved providential as there were new demands for co-operative thinking and action as a result of the First World War. German missions suffered severely due to the withdrawal of German missionaries. NMC "had to take responsibility for the control and administration of certain German mission fields," arranging for funds and personnel.⁴⁶

a. The First Decade

Though missionaries were in leadership of NMC during the years between 1914-1922, they tended to act in reference to "an imaginary body called 'the Indian Church' and one of the Standing Committees of the Council bore this name."⁴⁷ The anticipated Indian church already found expression in the All India Conferences of Indian Christians. The presidential address in 1923 conference at Bangalore given by KT Paul is indicative of the type of concerns that weighed on the minds of Indian Christians during this period: "The Responsibility of Christian Citizenship in India."⁴⁸ His sermon at the 1930 Serampore convocation asked:

What is the place of the Church of Christ in the currents of India's thought and feeling and aspirations and action? Is it an effective factor in determining India's standards, in the evolution of its corporate conscience? What is the contribution of Christian citizenship to public opinion in India?⁴⁹

Bishop VS Azariah continually reminded that Indian Christians were "most eagerly looking forward to similar opportunities [of leadership] in the Church" as rapid changes took place in the rest of India for Indian nationals towards transfer of responsibilities, responsible self-government and self-expression.⁵⁰ He emphasised the church rather than the mission

45. KS Latourette, *The History of the Expansion of Christianity: Volume VII: Advance Through Storm, 1914 and After*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1947, p. 303.

46. Baago, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-27. The situation repeated after the Second World War. Cf. Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 306; *IRM*, XXX, pp 110f.

47. Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

48. See reports of the conferences held at Bombay (1917), Nagpur (1918), Calcutta (1919) and Bangalore (1923); cf. C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, Madras: CLS, 1983 reprint, pp 233ff; See MM Thomas' references to these conferences in his *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM, 1969, last two chapters pp 239-318.

49. KT Paul quoted in HA Popley, *KT Paul: Christian Leader*, Calcutta, 1938, p. 171. Cf. MM Thomas, *Acknowledged Christ*, *op. cit.*, pp 274f, 283.

50. See *NMC Proceedings*, 1919, pp 19f, Cf. 1917, pp 19f, 1918, pp 17f; and see Kaj Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

as the chief factor in the missionary work in India; and this view gathered momentum when JH Oldham wrote *The World and the Gospel*.⁵¹ He exploded the prevalent understanding of the slogan "the evangelization of the world in this generation" as meaning surveys and calculations in order to arrange equal distribution of missionaries throughout the non-Christian world, and insisted on the aim of missionary work as the planting of the church and that the church should become indigenous thoroughly enough to be able to evangelise the rest of the population.⁵² The effect of this view on the NMC was phenomenal; it was "no less than a peaceful revolution in missionary thinking and policy."⁵³

Unity of the Christian church for the sake of missions was a concern of Indian Christians all along. A major accomplishment of NMC at this period was that of the "comity" arrangements which made possible numerous medical schools, missionary language schools, literature societies and evangelistic campaigns. NMC discovered that it is evangelism that leads to the unity of the church. The Evangelistic Forward Movement under the leadership of Sherwood Eddy, KT Paul and HA Popley had a significant effect on the churches in South India. It naturally brought out the question "If we can unite in preaching the gospel, what hinders us from uniting in one church?" It was discussed at ministerial conferences. Significant was the May 1919 conference at Tranquebar as it paved the way forward in South India for the formation of the Church of South India.⁵⁴

NMC published the two reports, *Christian Literature in India* and *A Programme of Advance*, in 1919 and established the *Indian Literature Fund* in 1920.⁵⁵ JN Farquhar inaugurated a new era in the production of Christian literature and helped to bring about a reorientation of the Protestant missions towards non-Christian religion, as mission in India

51. Madras: CLS, 1916.

52. *Ibid.*, pp 141f.

53. See Kaj Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

54. See Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954 for a description of Tranquebar 1919. We shall discuss the Church Union in South India shortly.

55. AC Clayton, a Methodist Missionary, was instrumental in this process of publication as well as fund raising. See *NMC Proceedings*, 1923, pp 22-25. See WM Brown, "The National Missionary Council and Christian Literature", *HF*, 1916, pp 47-61. Latourette observes "fairly extensive provision had been made before 1914" for Christian literature, *op. cit.*, VI: pp 190f.

faced a strongly religious culture with Hinduism, Islam and their many modern forms.⁵⁶

NMC comprised British and non-British missionaries. When Indian nationalism rose in different waves,⁵⁷ NMC was "vague, woolly and cautious" in its response. Non-British missionaries were not keen to involve in Indian politics. It often faced critical situations. In 1915, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, the secretary of the Servants of India Society,⁵⁸ wrote a pamphlet demanding that one of the conditions for receiving "grants-in-aid" from public funds by a school should be that attendance at the religious instruction hours must be optional. This was known as the conscience clause.⁵⁹ NMC resolved in 1916–17 to reject the same and was criticized as being rigid by a Christian missionary conference in London.⁶⁰ When Indian politics became more and more infested with communalism in the twenties, the Indian church was divided in opinion on the question of forming into a communal political party like the Muslim League. In South India the Christian community became recognised as a separate entity in 1919 and took the role of a political party. It was only after independence in the late forties that the National Council came out openly against the formation of a Christian political party.⁶¹

56. See the Lindsay Commission Report on *Christian Higher Education in India*, London: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931, p. 129. Farquhar's own writings were of immense value in helping the Western and Indian Christian reader to understand modern developments within Indian religions. See the Bibliography for a list of his writings.

57. There were three great waves of Indian nationalism that arose; 1905–10, 1917–22 and 1930–34, as Sundkler notes, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

58. This society was started under the influence of the Cowley Fathers in Poona, by Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915), the political guru of Gandhi.

59. See JA Wood, *Missionary Educational Policy and the Conscience Clause*, Ajmer, 1916, p. 8; WES Holland and EM Dyson's papers on "A Conscience Clause in Indian Schools and Colleges" presented at the Calcutta Missionary Conference, August 1916; W Meston's report of the Educational Committee to the NMC, 1917. See *HF*, 1916, pp 356–371 and 1917, pp 85, 119, 201, 214, 384.

60. See *Minutes of the Conference on the Proposal to Introduce a Conscience Clause in India*, 18 January 1917, London, 1917. The clause made very little impact and hence most missions later accepted it without any discussion; see Baago, *op. cit.*, pp 28f.

61. See DE Smith, *India as a Secular State*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963; Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 40; NCCR, 1931, p. 60.

b. The Second Decade

In 1922, NMC changed its name to National Christian Council in keeping with the shift from mission to church and missionaries to nationals.⁶² Though the period between 1923–41 was known as the "Paton-Hodge" era, several Indians gave leadership; KT Paul, VS Azariah, PO Philip, RB Manikam, MT Titus and others. The title of the official organ was changed from *Harvest Field* to *National Christian Council Review* in 1924.⁶³ During the twenties the National Council went through a period of social service influenced by American Social Gospel⁶⁴ theology. It followed in the footsteps of the "Man from Galilee, the ideal social worker, the ideal rural worker" and saw "rural uplift as 'the very essence of the Gospel of Christ'" and "Rural Reconstruction" as the preparation of "the way for the coming of the kingdom of God."

Not the preaching of the Gospel in words, but the following of Jesus in deeds was the fundamental theological principle behind the policy of the NCC in the 1920s.⁶⁵

The Hocking Report on *Rethinking Missions*⁶⁶ indicated the prevalent views with regard to missionary methods and their effectiveness, such as:

The primary aim of the Christian mission is not to create a church organization but to permeate the personal life of the individual and the fabric of human society with Christian ideals which will renew and revitalize the world.⁶⁷

These were reflected in the type of activities that the NCC undertook in close link with the Young Men's Christian Association. Rural education

62. See W Meston, "The Reorganization of the National Missionary Council HF, 1922, pp 247–257 and the "Editorials" on pp 81f and 241f. Cf. Ruth Rouse and SC Neill (ed.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517–1948*. London: SPCK, 1954, pp 392ff.

63. Herbert Anderson was the editor of *Harvest Field*. See Baago, *op. cit.*, pp 17, 33, 34 and 36.

64. The Social Gospel School rose at the turn of the century under the leadership of Walter Rauschenbusch. It had significant influence on churches around the world.

65. Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 49. Cf. NCCR, 1930, pp 274–277.

66. Edited by William E Hocking, sub-titled: *A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932.

67. Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

and industrial labour missions were emphasised,⁶⁸ and the NCC fought against opium traffic, got involved in the temperance movement and agitation for prohibition. It formed the Indian Social Hygiene Association and published a series of books in 1930 to be used for sex education. The Medical Missionary Association became the Christian Medical Association and joined the NCC in 1925.⁶⁹ Such growth of social concern was partly caused by the confusion that arose in the twenties on the concept of evangelism. Many felt evangelism as incompatible with the newborn spirit of nationalism. LP Larsen of United Theological College criticized the Evangelistic Forward Movement as a fetter on the church.⁷⁰ Prevalent communalism made evangelism appear as though buying up votes. Farquhar's *Crown of Hinduism* influenced Christian public opinion.⁷¹ New definitions were sought for evangelism, baptism and church membership. When Madras Christian Council called for a conference on evangelism at Chittoor in March 1926 with Stanley Jones and OK Chetty as leaders, opinions were divided on the need for baptism and church membership and their relevance for salvation.⁷² Nationally the Evangelistic Forward Movement suffered from lack of attention. The Unity Conference in Delhi framed a declaration of religious liberty in India, saying:

Freedom for the individual to follow any faith and to change his faith, as well as liberty to convert and reconvert was upheld; but

68. See Henry Whitehead, *Village Education in India*, Oxford, 1920, p. 1; Andrew HL Fraser, "The Educational Situation in India and its Bearing on Missionary Policy", *IRM*, I, 1912, pp 396 f; "The Recent Resolution of the Indian Government on Educational Policy", *IRM*, II, 1913, pp 434-443; See *Report of a Conference held at Moga on Rural Education in India*, Calcutta, 1920; WJ McKee, *Developing a Proper Curriculum for Village Schools in India*, Calcutta, 1930; *Proceedings*, 1924, pp 7, 48; 1926, p. 5; 1930, pp 13f; AB Van Doren, *Fourteen Experiments in Rural Education*, Calcutta, 1929; Sam Higginbottom, *The Gospel and the Plow or the Gospel and Modern Farming in Ancient India*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1921, pp 146; Kenyon L Butterfield, *The Rural Mission of the Church in Eastern Asia, Report and Recommendations*, New York: IMC, 1931, pp 222; *NCCR*, 1930, pp 274 ff; *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India*, 1931; MC Matheson, *Indian Industry*, 1929.

69. See *The Ministry of Healing in India, Handbook of the Christian Medical Association in India*, Mysore: Wesleyan Mission Press, 1932, pp 230; and *A Survey of Medical Missions in India*, Poona: NCC, pp 128.

70. See Bago, *op. cit.*; for Larsen's views, see Gibbs, L. P. Larsen, *A Theology for Mission*, *op. cit.*

71. London: 1913.

72. See *Bulletin of the Madras Representative Council*, 1926, p. 10.

conversion, the conference said, should not be accomplished by "fraud, force, or unfair means, such as the offering of material inducement..." Persons under 16 should under no circumstances be converted unless it be along with their parents.⁷³

William Paton criticised that the church was not sufficiently using the opportunity for evangelism that India presented during this period. An exceptional development in the NCC in this period for evangelism was the formation of the Henry Martyn School of Islamics in 1929, under the influence of MT Titus and Samuel M Zwemer.⁷⁴

c. The Third Decade

The thirties marked a return to evangelism in the history of the council.⁷⁵ Several factors influenced the return. In the West there were new theological trends under the influences of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. In the East in Japan, Burma and China, there were revivals, the news of which affected the churches in India. Bishop VS Azariah and JZ Hodge "both on fire for the evangelistic work of the church" became the chairman and secretary of the council. In addition, when Gandhiji issued his call to the missionaries to do social and economic uplift activities without proselytization, it caused a rethinking among missionaries as to whether evangelism or social work was their primary task. In a press interview Gandhi declared:

But if they did as they are now doing, namely using hospitals and schools for the purpose of proselytization, then I would certainly ask them to withdraw. One nation's religion is as good as another nation's. Certainly India's religions are not inadequate for her needs. India needs no spiritual conversion.⁷⁶

"We cannot agree to regard [Christian] medical work as purely philanthropic work" wrote Dr. C Frimodt Moller,⁷⁷ and the unanimous view was to hold evangelism as primary. Stanley Jones, HA Popley, Bishop Azariah and many more promoted evangelism during the thirties.

73. See NCCR, 1931, pp 334f.

74. Titus was on the NCC staff dealing with the special secretariat for Muslim work, 1928-30 and 1945-47. Zwemer was a missionary to the Muslim world based at Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. The Henry Martyn Institute is located at present at Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, directed by Andreas D'Souza. It publishes *The Bulletin* [English Quarterly], *Mubashshir* [Urdu Quarterly] and *Interaction* [Occasional News Letter].

75. Baago, *op. cit.*, pp 56-58.

76. See NCCR, 1931, p. 271 [quoted from *Times of India*].

77. *Ibid.*, pp 298-301; cf. pp 228 and 229.

NCC published "Tracts for the Times" in 1933, Azariah's *Five Year Plan of Advance* in 1934, appointed a special committee on evangelism and organised "weeks of evangelism." The *Bulletin of the Forward Movement in Evangelism* reported of mass movements and conversions. It was then that the NCC undertook two major studies, one on the Christian mass movements and the other on Christian higher education

Already in the twenties there were questions raised on the motives behind mass conversions and their authenticity. Opinions were divided. The NCC meeting at Madras in 1928 appointed a study commission which, under the leadership of Bishop JW Pickett, undertook a study of the mass movements during 1930–32. Its report⁷⁸ became the guiding map for the Forward Movement in Evangelism through the thirties. The report came out strongly in favour of mass movements as the most natural way of conversion in rural India, and also cleared the issue surrounding social work and evangelism.

There should be no hesitation about ministering to temporal needs... but just as clearly there should be no question about the primacy of the spiritual aim. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...and all these things shall be added unto you...Nothing but failure has proceeded from missionary efforts in which the order of Jesus has been reversed....⁷⁹

The return to evangelism in this period was also a return to evangelism as a duty of the church. The view that evangelism was done by mission and that the church was merely a fruit of the evangelism done by missions was repeatedly refuted. The council held that "the Church is the central and permanent factor. Evangelism must be church-centred...Mass movement work is a part of this larger evangelism...All this work centres in the Church."⁸⁰ And the council changed its constitution in 1936 to say "the Church is central and permanent" and made churches to be official members of the NCC.

d. The Fourth Decade

In 1941, when RB Manikam took over the reins as the executive secretary, the "revolutionary spirit of the young Indian Church" which "was scarcely present in the Council" thus far, began to take hold. Political developments were serious. The Japanese army was threatening Indian

78. See the report of Methodist Bishop J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India: A Study with Recommendations*, Cincinnati: Abingdon Press, Lucknow: LPH, 1933, pp 382.

79. See Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 53; cf. Pickett, *op. cit.*, pp 346f.

80. *Proceedings*, 1936, pp 19, 25; quoted in Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

borders. India was tense due to

the intensification of nationalism, the political impasse which followed the refusal of some of the nationalists to co-operate with the Government of India, the failure of the proposals brought by Sir Stafford Cripps to compose the difficulties, the demand of the Indian National Congress for the immediate and complete transfer of control of India from the British, and the internment of the Congress leaders...⁸¹

The nationalistic spirit was inflamed more than ever. In addition, Hindu-Muslim tensions rose high and turned acute.⁸² Such an environment accentuated the Indian Christian plea for the transfer of control of administrative posts and of property from foreigners to nationals in the church. The All India Conference of Indian Christians in 1943 called upon the British government to promise full freedom to India within two years from the end of the war.⁸³ Turbulent years followed – and we shall consider the significance of national independence shortly.

In the forties, the questions surrounding evangelism, conversion and proselytization faced new challenges as religious freedom suffered attack from Hindus and as church-mission dynamics found new emphasis as property ownership questions arose in independent India. The church-centred theology of the thirties gained further strength in the forties and fifties through the ecumenical movement, so much so that this as the theology of the National Council steered almost all of the council's

81. See Latourette, *op. cit.*, VII: p. 306.

82. See Theodore Gabriel, "Inter-Religious Conflicts in India: The Dynamics of Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar, 1498–1947," unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1986; Clifford Manshardt, *The Hindu-Muslim Problem in India*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1936; Richard D. Lambert, *Hindu-Muslim Riots*, Ph. D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1951; Wayne Marshall Myrum, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in India 1910–1924*, Ph. D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1954; Gene Robert Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in India*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1975; KM Panikkar, "The Psychology of Hindu-Muslim Riots," *Contemporary Review*, 1927 and *Young India*, 6 October 1921.

83. See *IRM*, XXXIII:1, January 1944, p. 29; Cf. EC Bhatt, "The Indian Christian Community and the Nationalist Movement," *NCCR*, 1942, pp 446–452. Bhatt made sarcastic comparison between British imperialism and missionary imperialism revealing the bitterness among younger generation Christians against the British in the forties. See the "Editorial: Christians in India and the Political Situation," *NCCR*, 1942, pp 437f; see Baago, *op. cit.*, pp 64f for the attack of the NCC on the British and the British Christian Council's defence.

activities in this period. The activities included adult literacy, The Christian Home Movement, social concerns, relief work, welfare of the handicapped, audio-visual department, youth council and Christian higher and theological education.⁸⁴ Of these, the last two shall be considered in the following pages as they relate to our study.

The Christian population in India was approximately four million in 1911; of whom 3,676,122 were in British India and the native states, the rest in French and Portuguese territories.⁸⁵ From the census of 1941, Latourette quotes the Christian population as between 7,750,000 and 8,000,000. Christian numbers had doubled in a thirty year period. Whereas the total Indian population was augmented by 10% during 1921 to 1931, Hindus by 10.4%, Muslims by 13% and Sikhs by 33%, Protestants grew by 41%.

In the decade 1921-1931 the section having the largest proportionate increase of Christians was Hyderabad, where the percentage of growth was 141.6. Travancore was next with 36.8 per cent, then the Central Provinces with 31.6 per cent, and the Madras Presidency with 29.9 per cent. In other words, Christians were still most numerous in the South and were multiplying the most rapidly, both in gross totals and proportionately, in the Deccan and the South. They were still the weakest in the Indo-Gangetic plain, the classic strongholds of the dominant faiths of India, Hinduism and Islam.⁸⁶

Thus through the stormy period Christianity grew rapidly compared to the national population and became the third religion of India in terms of numbers, although far behind Hinduism or Islam. In the words of Latourette, "Christianity was an active and growing leaven in the new India which was in the process of painful birth."⁸⁷

The National Council ventured to give leadership to the churches in fulfilling their objectives. Its objectives in 1914 were:

- (1) to facilitate co-operation;
- (2) to be in communication and consultation with the Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference (later the International Missionary Council);
- (3) to consider questions that affect the whole missionary field; and
- (4) to convene an All-India Missionary Conference when feasible.⁸⁸

84. For a precise account of the details, see Baago's work, *op. cit.*

85. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VII: p. 307.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*, p. 315.

88. Baago, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Later, in the forties and after independence, the objectives became:

- (1) to initiate and stimulate thinking on the church, on co-operation of all Christian agencies and on the unity of the church;
- (2) to help to formulate a Christian public opinion in India and to act as a liaison with the Government;
- (3) to make provision for the convening of an All India Conference when it is thought desirable; and
- (4) to consult with the World Council of Churches and other national councils.⁸⁹

The National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon, as it earlier was, had undergone changes as the Christian Councils of Ceylon, Burma and Pakistan broke away in 1941, 1948 and 1951 respectively. Baago criticises the NCCI that it contributed "little to the indigenization of the Church in India" and "played no direct role in the Church Union Movement in India" and failed to carry out its proposals to start a "Centre for the Study of Hindusim" and a "Centre where Indian Christian thinkers could devote themselves to the interpretation of Christianity in terms of Indian thought."⁹⁰ Yet the National Christian Council of India had a significant role to play in independent India, as we shall consider later.

4. The Lindsay Commission Report on Christian Higher Education

What is the mission of the church? It started with education as *preparatio evangelica*⁹¹ for Scottish missionaries Alexander Duff, William Miller and colleagues. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, "a period when Hinduism was intellectually and morally at a very low ebb"⁹² causing reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy to initiate modern social and religious reform movements,⁹³ "a change in the soil of Hinduism" appeared a viable target for Christian missions. The Christian colleges attempted and

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

91. *Preparatio evangelica* implies the belief that in order to grasp the gospel of Jesus Christ and to believe and receive it by faith with intelligence, people need a preparation through education.

92. Such condition was true of Bengal as testified in Dinesh Chandra Sen's *History of Bengal Language and Literature* and the writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. See Lindsay Commission Report: *Christian Higher Education in India*. London: OUP, 1931, p. 42; referred as LCR from hereon.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 43. For an account of these movements, see JN Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London 1918; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919, pp 471.

accomplished exactly such change, though "it has not quite brought with it the consequences....they anticipated."⁹⁴ The new soil did not become receptive to the gospel. Instead of "dynamiting the Hindu fortress,"⁹⁵ "the light has shone over India" through the educational missions, "awakening and transforming Hinduism, reopening old springs within it, giving it new vigour...strengthening rather than overcoming the power of Hinduism to resist Christianity."⁹⁶

William Miller spoke of the Christ beyond Christianity in the 1880s.⁹⁷ So did CF Andrews⁹⁸ at the end of the Great Century.⁹⁹ JN Farquhar inaugurated a new era in the production of Christian literature and a new orientation of missionary effort in India towards the non-Christian religions.¹⁰⁰ Responding to the criticism of Keshub Chandra Sen,¹⁰¹ PC

94. *LCR*, p. 43.

95. See George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff*, London 1881, p. 68. Duff's mine never blew. His daughter recounted the distress and "the sense of betrayal which Duff felt as he watched his mine being defused by neo-Hegelian Biblical critics within the Church colleges of Scotland." See AF Walls, "The Best Thinking of the Best Heathen: Humane Learning and the Missionary Movement" in Keith Robbins (ed.), *Religion and Humanism*, Studies in Church History 17, Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1981, pp 341-353.

96. *LCR*, pp 43f. PD Devanandan in his "The YMCA in a Non-Christian Environment, the Significance of the 'C'" (1951, p. 57) wrote: "Almost a century of work in Christian institutions has brought many thoughtful Hindus to believe that essential Christianity...is not incompatible with essential Hinduism.....A new resistance to the Gospel has been set up by the very Gospel we have proclaimed" (quoted in RW Scott, *Evangelism in India - Ecumenical Studies*, Geneva: WCC, October 1952, p. 13).

97. Miller said "You have not to do with churches or missionaries. They have no authority as your guides. It is of Christ you have to judge." Quoted from O Kandasamy Chetty, *William Miller*, Madras: CLS, 1924, p. 52 in Eric J Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, London: SCM, 1977, p. 23.

98. EJ Sharpe, *ibid.*, p. 23. See CF Andrews, "A Missionary's Experience" in *The Indian Interpreter*, October 1909, p. 111.

99. The period between 1792 to 1914, when the Christian missionary societies saw the great expansion of Christianity around the world, is labelled The Great Century by Kenneth Scott Latourette. See his 7 volume *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1945-7.

100. *LCR*, p. 129.

101. Sen's statement "I found Christ spoke one language and Christianity another" is quoted from Max Muller's *Chips from a German Workshop IV*, London 1875, p. 287 in EJ Sharpe, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

Mazoomdar¹⁰² and others, Farquhar "urged his readers to turn, not to the Church, but to Jesus."¹⁰³ He and his contemporaries strove

after a deeper understanding of India and things Indian, an attempt at greater attunement with the mind of India, and an entirely sincere recognition of India's national heritage, symbolised...in... Hinduism.¹⁰⁴

They rejected the earlier impatient and crude missionary iconoclasm.¹⁰⁵ "Protestant theology" at this period "was more pragmatic than dogmatic or reflective."¹⁰⁶ The earlier unified vision of Christian colleges as providing for "an ordinary liberal education" as well as for "the preparation of missionaries from those born in the country" – as found in Serampore College¹⁰⁷ – had changed through the century. These two types of education began traveling "separate ways" and theological training became "no concern of the Christian College" as it was getting isolated with its own concern for liberal education.¹⁰⁸ Most Christians were village converts who were not prepared for such liberal education.

A hundred years later, India, "the jewel in the crown," was in the grip of "the great waves of nationalism."¹⁰⁹ The Indian National Congress,

102. Mazoomdar said "It is the spirit of Christ's life that we demand in India – charity, temperance, wisdom, holiness – but they cram us with the sawdust of theology;" quoted in EP Rice, "The New Theology and Mission Work," *HF*, October 1908, p. 364. See Sharpe, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

103. "Will you not try to see the real Jesus? Will you not study the Gospels, and try to understand the secret of his extraordinary influence? Will you not try to get a glimpse of this face that is loved as no other son of man is loved?" asks Farquhar in his *Christ and the Gospels*, Calcutta, 1901, pp 7f. See Sharpe, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

105. *Ibid.*, pp 27 & 32.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

107. *LCRp*, 117. See George Howells, *The Story of Serampore and its College*, Serampore 1927 and Wilma Stewart (ed.), *The Story of Sermpore and Its College*, Calcutta: Sermpore College Council, 1960.

108. *LCR*, p. 117.

109. "The national struggle of 1905–34 has been described as a series of three great waves of nationalism, 1905–10, 1917–22 and 1930–34"; quoted from RP Dutt, *India Today*, 1940, pp 264ff in Bengt Sundkler, *The Movement Towards Union, The Church of South India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954, p. 85; cited in Kaj Baago, *The History of the National Christian Council of India 1914–1964*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1965, p. 27.

born in 1885, was gathering momentum and demanding *swaraj*.¹¹⁰ The Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1917¹¹¹ recommended instead a gradual introduction of self-government, thus causing the second wave of nationalism. The publication of the Rowlatt Bills¹¹² further increased the immense political tension, accompanied on the one hand by Gandhiji's *satyagraha*¹¹³ and on the other by violence in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Amritsar. The rising tide of nationalism reached its peak when in 1920 the Indian National Congress accepted the *swadeshi*¹¹⁴ policy proposed by Gandhi. The importance of *swadeshi* was recognised by some Indian Christians.¹¹⁵ Through the All India Conferences of Indian Christians,¹¹⁶ the Christo

110. *Swaraj* means "self rule". Cf. RC Mazumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, volume 1, Calcutta: KL Mukhopadhyaya, 1966.

111. The British Parliament issued a statement in 1917 recognising the need for increasing the association of Indians in every branch of administration. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State, drafted a scheme of political devolution known as diarchy. It provided for the transfer of many of the functions of government from central to provincial governments. Particularly in "nation-building departments" such as education, public health, agriculture and local self-government. The proposals were given effect by an act of 1919. See V[apal] P[angunni] Menon, *Montagu-Chelmsford Reform*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965, p. 60 and *An Outline of Indian Constitutional History*, Bombay: BVB, 1965, pp 84.

112. The Rowlatt Act of 1919 became the worst mistake, arming the government with sweeping powers to deal with revolutionary conspiracies. The Act was never really implemented, but this retrograde measure was forced through with indecent haste and its enactment led to a nationwide hartal, sporadic attacks on non-official British subjects in the Punjab, a ban on meetings in Amritsar, defiance of the ban by a crowd and the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the clamping down of obnoxious martial law. The government of India condemned the massacre, and General Dyer who ordered the firing was dismissed. But a large section of the British press and the House of Commons supported him. See VP Menon, *An Outline of Indian Constitutional History*, *op. cit.*, pp 25f.

113. *Satyagraha* = grasp of truth; "sacrifice-firmness" or "soul force" of Gandhiji's passive resistance.

114. *Swadeshi* = national selfhood, independent nationhood, home rule.

115. See JP Jones, "A National Church for the Indian Christians" in *National Missionary Intelligencer*, June 1911, p. 84. Cf. Sundkler, *op. cit.*, pp 82-90.

116. See a report of the movement towards indigenisation within the Indian Christian community in DF Ebright, *The National Missionary Society of India 1905-1942*, Chicago, 1944, pp 143ff. The All India Christian Conferences met from the year 1914.

Samaj,¹¹⁷ the *Harvest Field*¹¹⁸ and the *Christian Patriot*,¹¹⁹ Christian opinion on nationalism was shaped through these turbulent years. The National Christian Council¹²⁰ faced the question: Would it co-operate with or oppose the struggle for *swaraj*? The two statements it issued in 1917 and in 1920 are criticized by Kaj Baago as

...vague, woolly and cautious in their choice of words, that they could be interpreted both ways. All that the council dared to say in favour of Home Rule were some poetic phrases about how new responsibility might add "to the richness of life and to the development of personality."¹²¹

But men like CF Andrews and KT Paul were outspoken on the need for independence for India and the preparing of Christians for it.¹²² The British Raj responded to the passionate nationalist demand by implementing the Montague-Chelmsford report in the administrative field and the Sadler Commission¹²³ report for higher education, starting five new universities¹²⁴ within two years.

The church in mission faced a new situation in India during the first half

117. The Christo Samaj was originally organised at Calcutta by KC Banerjee and JG Shome in 1887 as a Christian parallel to the Brahmo Samaj. See Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969, p. 5. The Madras group of Christians constituted a South Indian Christo Samaj in 1913, attempting to reconcile Christianity and Indian life. See Ebright, *op. cit.*, pp 145f. They brought together Indians and missionaries in retreats to face the problems of the day "through prayer and discussion". See KT Paul, "Indian Leadership in Mission and Church," in *Young Men of India*, August 1918.

118. *Harvest Field* was the official organ of the National Missionary Council, later replaced by the *National Christian Council Review* of the NCCI in 1924.

119. *Christian Patriot* was published by Madras Christians from 1890; it was edited by V Chakkarai from 1911.

120. For a history of the NCCI, see Kaj Baago's account cited in 43 above.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

122. CF Andrews' pamphlet *Independence - The Immediate Need* (1920) was described as "Nationalism pure and simple" by Nehru in his *Autobiography*, p. 66. See KT Paul's presidential address at the All India Christian Conference, *The Responsibility of Christian Citizenship in India - Some Practical Suggestions*, Bangalore, 1923.

123. The Calcutta University Commission Report was known after its chairman Sir Michael Sadler. It was a study carried out in 1917, which affected also the universities of Madras, Bombay, Allahabad and Lahore. See *LCR*, pp 68-70.

124. At Aligarh, Rangoon, Lucknow, Dacca and Delhi.

of the twentieth century. Education was taken up by the government on larger scales and Christian colleges were affiliated to the government universities. Then the question arose: What is the mission of the Christian college in modern India? This became the question of much gravity in 1929 when Christian college representatives met at Agra.¹²⁵ At their request the NCCI through the International Missionary Council¹²⁶ organised the Lindsay Commission on Christian Higher Education in India,¹²⁷ to study and evaluate the contribution of Christian colleges and to sharpen their focus. Not all Christians or missionary societies saw the importance of secular education as their responsibility. Some felt that secular education was the responsibility of the government and that the church in mission had only the responsibility for theological education.¹²⁸ Such a view was strongly expressed at the end of the nineteenth century in Serampore.¹²⁹ We shall not concern ourselves with the Lindsay Commission's findings on the Christian colleges involved in secular education, as our purpose in this book, is confined to the study of developments in theological education in India.

The inclusion of theological colleges in the study of Lindsay Commission

125. Indian Christian and missionary educators met at Agra in February 1929 with representatives of the majority of the Christian colleges in India. Recognising the desire for and the unavailability of quality education in India, they felt that the call of the hour for Christian colleges was "a prompt, comprehensive, thorough, even radical reconsideration of Christian education policy . . ." See *LCR*, pp 1-6.

126. The NCC passed on the request of the Agra conference to the Conference of Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland and the Committee of Reference and Counsel in America, who in turn approached the IMC. The IMC discussed the matter at its meeting at Williamstown, Massachusetts, in July 1929.

127. The Commission consisted of eight members: two from the NCCI (SN Mukerji and SK Datta); two from the British missions (Arthus Davis and Nicol Macnicol); two from American missions (WA Brown and WJ Hutchins); and two from the IMC (Oscar Buck as secretary and AD Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, as chairman). *LCR*, pp 5f. For the terms of reference see p. 2.

128. The debate between the varying opinions on the importance of education could be found in the nineteenth century British mission conference reports. See the Liverpool volume, *Conference* (on missions, held in 1860) at Liverpool, London 1860, pp 118-120; *Make Jesus King*, *op. cit.*, *Students and the Missionary Problems*, Addresses delivered at the international students missionary conference, London, 1900; AJ Gordon, *The Holy Spirit in Missions*, London, 1893.

129. See G Howells, *op. cit.*, pp 24f; W Stewart (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 32.

was an afterthought.¹³⁰ There were over seventy-six institutions at this time in India which were concerned with training for Christian ministry, ranging from the catechetical schools conducted by a single person to theological seminaries at the Bachelor of Divinity degree level.¹³¹ The commission grouped them under three general heads:

a. Theological seminaries teaching in English up to the B.D. degree affiliated with Serampore:

United Theological College, Bangalore

Bishop's College, Calcutta

The India Methodist Theological College, Jabalpur

The United Theological College, Saharanpur

Serampore College

b. Theological schools teaching in the vernacular but with a considerable use of English as a source of reference....Some...are union institutions, others conducted by a single church; preparing men for the Christian ministry in its non-technical form... few give the L.Th....

c. Technical schools for ordinands, catechists, Bible women and others, usually conducted by a single person or at most two or three, and varying greatly in the standards they set and the purpose for which they are designed.¹³²

Forty-five of the most important vernacular schools were scattered over eleven language areas; "8 teaching in Tamil, 6 in Telugu, 2 in Marathi, 2 in Gujarati, 4 in Hindi and so on."¹³³ Only 8 of the 76 were union institutions and others were denominational.

The Lindsay Commission dealt with a) the place of theological education in the programme of higher education of the church in India; b) a general plan for the development of theological education in India; c) the content of theological education best adapted to the needs of the Indian church

130. The original terms of reference for the commission made no mention of TE; but at the request of the NCC and some mission boards, it was later agreed that "higher theological colleges and seminaries" should be included in the study "to the extent of determining their relationship to the question of higher collegiate education." Cf. CW Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, p. 17; this book is referred to henceforth as *Christian Minister*.

131. *LCR*, p. 236. The *Directory of Christian Missions* for this period listed a total of 76 schools and colleges of which 14 were of higher grade. See *LCR*, p. 237. Only 8 of these were union institutions.

132. *LCR*, pp 236f.

133. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

at that time; and d) the training of theological teachers.¹³⁴

The principles which they thought should determine the future developments of theological education in India were:¹³⁵ 1) Theological education should be regarded as a part of Christian higher education; 2) The content of Christian education should be rethought in the light of the present needs of India as a whole; and theological colleges which have freedom, unlike the universities, should develop their curriculum in the light of existing needs; 3) Theological colleges should undertake researches in comparative theology, applied ethics, Christian education, church administration, etc.; 4) Theological institutions should be located near central institutions of higher education and develop their own discipline and devotional life while effectively co-operating with them; 5) Theological education should be organised on a co-operative basis; 6) Theological education should be in vital contact with the life and thought of the Indian church; 7) While B.D. level training in English was maintained to guard against provincialism, there was need for developing more vernacular institutions; 8) Exchange of staff between the larger and smaller colleges, and exposure of staff to research and extension projects should be made possible; and 9) Research fellowships should be open to theological college graduates also.

The commission noted that there was much deficiency in the existing theological education. The different colleges were unrelated to each other and lacked a comprehensive plan. Anglicans and Methodists sent their students from South India all the way to Calcutta and Jabalpur, ignoring what was available in the South. There was much duplication of resources due to lack of co-operation and too much dependence on the West both in personnel and curriculum, lacking a plan to adapt to Indian resources.¹³⁶

If one considers the state of theological education as a whole one is impressed by its elementary character, its denominational character and its isolation from the general trend of academic education.¹³⁷

The commission found Serampore-affiliated colleges to be an exception to the above statement in that they were already attempting to adapt to the contemporary Indian situation.¹³⁸ The prevailing general state of theological education aroused Indian theological teachers to urge for a

134. *Ibid.*, p. 235

135. *Ibid.*, pp 241-3.

136. *Ibid.*, pp 243 f.

137. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

138. *Ibid.*

"radical reconsideration of the present methods, a reduction in the number of higher theological institutions and a concentration of resources at the points of the greatest need."¹³⁹ The commission in its observation found certain encouraging factors such as:

- a) The standardisation of higher theological education through the Serampore B.D....
- b) The increase in the number of union theological colleges, both English and vernacular...
- c) The keen interest felt by many of those concerned in improving standards for ministerial education and work by a curriculum adapted to meet the needs of the church in India.
- d) The provision...of follow-up courses for ministers...and of supplementary courses for the wives of theological students...
- e) The provision through the theological committee of the National Christian Council of an organ through which these efforts may find united expression.¹⁴⁰

At the end of their study, the Lindsay Commission made the following recommendations:¹⁴¹

1. Theological colleges must play an important part in the development of higher Christian education in India;
2. Theological colleges must be located in close proximity to the central colleges, where research and extensions are to be carried on to allow theological students to interact with students of other disciplines;
3. Theology should be made a subject of research at selected colleges – Madras first and then Allahabad, Lahore, Calcutta and Bombay in sequence;
4. Co-operation to the fullest extent should be ensured between the more important theological colleges, both by reconsidering the need of the church as a whole and accommodating the values of each denominational emphasis within the co-operative colleges;¹⁴²
5. Union or co-operative schools of theology must be developed in each important language area in line with the recommendation of the NCC;

139. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

140. *Ibid.*, pp 244–7. The NCC Committee on Theological Education was formed in 1924.

141. *Ibid.*, pp 245–8.

142. For example, the distinct traditions of discipline and worship of the Anglicans, the particularity of the Methodist heritage, etc.

6. There should be great variety of lower forms of theological training made available with appropriate staff;
7. The higher theological colleges should provide special training courses to those who would teach Bible at arts colleges;
8. Adequate Indian Christian staff should be developed;
9. Topics of research in the field of applied theology and religion and staff capable of such research should be identified and funds raised to facilitate the researches;
10. "Every possible provision" should be made "for the early supply of a strong body of Indian theological teachers," while utilising "to the greatest possible extent" the services of men now qualified;
11. A committee should be appointed to identify the books immediately needed and the men to write them, in order to provide an early supply of suitable theological literature in the vernacular;
12. Every attempt should be made to enlist the interest and counsel of prominent Indian Christian laymen in the matter of theological education.

An additional three recommendations were made by Lindsay Commission members Professors WA Brown, OM Buck and Dr. Nicol Macnicol¹⁴³ from their American and Scottish precedents saying that B.D. should be a post-graduate degree after a bachelor degree in arts, science or any other field, a strictly academic degree of high class, primarily designed for those in teaching, research and literary production; that L.Th. should be revised as per the recommendations and observations made by the committee of theological teachers and pastors; and that the project method should be used largely in order that "each subject studied should be related to the practical use to be made of it."

KK Kuruvilla of United Theological College, Bangalore,¹⁴⁴ expressed his agreement with the Lindsay Commission report in that the aim of theological education should be "to develop rich Christian life and to strengthen and extend the Church in India" and "to meet the needs of India" and that "the only way of meeting these needs was by united action." But Kuruvilla felt that the attempts in church union, Indianisation and

143. *Ibid.*, p. 249. Professor William Adams Brown of Union Theological Seminary, New York, represented American missions; Dr. Oscar M Buck of the Department of Missions and Comparative Religions at Drew University, New Jersey, represented IMC; and Dr. Nicol Macnicol of United Free Church of Scotland at Poona represented British missions on the Lindsay Commission.

144. See *UTC Magazine*, Silver Jubilee Number, October 1935, pp 50f.

nationalization have not touched the root of the problems. Hence he suggested some practical methods to be followed in theological education. The students should be made to understand thoroughly the implications of Indian religious terms and to relate them to Christian doctrines both in theory and practice. The term *karma* should be combatted not by exposition of the Christian conception of redemption but by active social service such as the starting of village industries.¹⁴⁵

Responses to the Lindsay Commission report were positive, and immediately the NCC Committee on Theological Education pressed the recommendations on the attention of the institutions, churches and missions concerned.

There was a great deal of discussion on the subject of co-operation, on the number and location of higher theological institutions, and on the possibility of establishing a union school of theology in each main language area.¹⁴⁶

Charles Ranson observes "much talk has flowed across the conference table since," but sadly concludes "yet little has happened in the field of theological education." Considerable discussion, but little action; and the commission's insistence upon concentration and co-operation has not produced very marked effect upon the number or efficiency of the theological schools. "Progress was made in some directions, but many of the most fundamental questions were still matters of irresolute debate." Only half the number of ordinands needed were being trained at

145. Kuruvilla addressed the situation in light of the following developments: The 1910 World Missionary Conference preparatory studies collected information on Hinduism, the place of evangelism in the Hindu society, etc., (see DS Cairns' collection of such contributions. A manuscript copy of this unpublished collection was held at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Aberdeen. When the Centre moved to the New College, University of Edinburgh in 1986, the collection was deposited at the University Archives, University of Aberdeen, Scotland). In 1909 AG Hogg of Madras Christian College wrote his *Karma and Redemption – An Essay toward the Interpretation of Hinduism and the Restatement of Christianity* (Madras: CLS, 1909, reprinted with Introduction by EJ Sharpe, 1970). The NMC went through a period of emphasising social service during the 1920s, developing rural reconstruction, rural education and industrial labour missions (see K Baago, *op. cit.*, pp 45–50). Beyond Hogg's conceptual philosophical rendering of a Christian redemption over against *karma*, Kuruvilla seems to find the active service of redemption undertaken by the NCC as a more acceptable way forward for Christian mission in India.

146. *Christian Minister*, p. 18.

theological schools in the thirties and the need continued to be unmet.¹⁴⁷

5. The Contribution of Tambaram 1938 to Theological Education

When the International Missionary Council met in Tambaram in 1938,¹⁴⁸ it recognised the statistical realities that India had 2,718,499 non-Roman Christians in 21,933 worshipping groups (11,824 organised congregations and 10,109 unorganised groups), shepherded by 2,522 ordained men and 10,174 unordained workers.¹⁴⁹ Not only was this inadequate in terms of numbers, but also quality. Tambaram took note that

Year after year the church in India received very large additions through conversion from Hinduism. Some hundreds of new congregations are being formed every year, calling for the appointment of ministers and pastors.¹⁵⁰

And that the general education and training of the ministers and pastors was "inadequate, lagging behind" compared with the advance in education and general culture experienced by church members, the laity in secular professions.¹⁵¹ Most shepherds were also burdened with administrative responsibilities.¹⁵² Though there were (a) Bible schools for the training of full-time unordained workers in the church; (b) theological schools for the training of the ordained pastoral ministry and (c) theological colleges for more advanced training,¹⁵³ they were not recruiting and training sufficient numbers of full-time Christian workers. It was said:

the need for more and better qualified ministers to the existing congregations as well as the rapidly increasing number of new congregations is very great and very urgent.¹⁵⁴

This was the case with the Protestant churches that resulted from the eighteenth and nineteenth century missionary expansion of the Western churches in India. In contrast, the Malankara Orthodox Jacobite Syrian

147. *Ibid.*, pp 132, 168. Cf. *LCR*, pp 234–249.

148. See the 7 volume Report of the IMC Conference at Tambaram, Madras, 12–29 December, 1938; particularly *The Life of the Church* (vol. 4) and *The World Mission of the Church: The Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the IMC*, London: OUP for IMC, 1939.

149. Quoted from the *New Statistical Survey of the World Mission of the Christian Church in The Life of the Church*, op. cit., p. 229.

150. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

151. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

153. *Ibid.*, pp 204–8.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

Church was well provided with 541 priests to serve her 490 parishes.¹⁵⁵ Since the health and progress of a congregation depended upon the devotion and untiring labour of a full-time worker, the continuation of the Protestant churches as they were could only mean the stagnation and stunted growth of several thousands of congregations.¹⁵⁶ The questions faced then in the Indian setting were,

What is the training required for the best equipped ministers in India?

What can be done to attract the best students into the ministry?

The training of women workers of all grades;

The training of lay workers;

The adjustments and ventures required in order that throughout the country there may be adequate and efficient institutions for the training of all grades of workers.¹⁵⁷

At Tambaram we find a recognition of the importance of both ordained and lay ministries by both men and women. On one hand it was said,

The Church is the Body of Christ. In all its work of ministering, whether priestly, pastoral or prophetic, it is animated by the life of the risen and ascended Christ... This ministry is committed to us as a function of the whole body of Christ and cannot therefore be claimed exclusively by individuals or one order within the Church.¹⁵⁸

But there was nevertheless the affirmation of the specialised ministry:

... from the time of the Apostles there have been special orders and ministries in the Church, given by God, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.

... it is the will of Christ for His Church that there should be within it a regular ministry of the Word and Sacraments. Experience seems to show that churches rarely flourish or propagate themselves widely without the strength given by a specialised ministry.¹⁵⁹

The Tambaram report made certain observations about the place of Christian higher education in the shaping of the secular witness of the Christian laity, as well as the place of Christian theological education in enhancing the specialised ministry. It acknowledged that "Education is

155. *Ibid.*, pp 232-4.

156. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

159. *Ibid.*

and must always be a major concern of the Church."¹⁶⁰ Much of the missionary educational programmes of the nineteenth century preceded the birth of the native church in the mission fields. They were inherited by the native churches from the missionary societies only later in the post-colonial period. Tambaram noted with satisfaction the large share of leadership rendered by Christian nationals to the cause of education, but desired a proper relating of such activities to the witness of the local church.¹⁶¹ Tambaram emphasised the need to guard against the danger of secularisation and the need to develop more contemporary researches into the problems of the community and the church.¹⁶²

With regard to theological education, Tambaram felt that the condition of theological education was "one of the greatest weaknesses of the whole Christian enterprise," in that "almost all the younger churches are dissatisfied with the present system of training for the ministry and with its results."¹⁶³ Hence the conference instructed IMC to arrange for visits to the main centres of theological education of the younger churches, with a view to do detailed studies of the situation where such studies have not already been made; and to work out the policy and programme for the training of the ministry of the younger churches.¹⁶⁴ But this great enthusiasm of IMC was hindered by the gathering war clouds. The comprehensive study proposed was inevitably and indefinitely postponed. The fruition of the thought seeds of Tambaram had to wait till after the war. Two decades later the Theological Education Fund¹⁶⁵ picked up the strands to develop macro-level researches, revisions and revitalisation of theological education.

1938 to 1958 were significant years in India. Important events affected the whole church and her ministerial formation. We shall consider them in order, the Ranson Study, national independence and church union in South India, in this section, and the post-Independence events in later sections.

160. *Ibid.*, p. 54

161. *Ibid.*, pp 54-60.

162. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

163. *Christian Minister*, p. 19.

164. *Ibid.*, p. 19; Several studies were made later and the reports include: Bengt Sundkler's *Christian Ministry in Africa*, Wilfred Schopel's *The Christian Ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Douglas Webster's *Survey of Training of the Ministry in the Middle East*, Clark Scanlon's *Church Growth through Theological Education*, etc.

165. For an account of the history and accomplishments of TEF see Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*, Madras: CLS for PTE/WCC, 1981, pp 252.

6. Ranson Report on the Christian Minister in India

When the comprehensive study of theological education proposed by the Tambaram Conference had to be postponed indefinitely due to the gathering war clouds, the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon convened a conference in December 1939 on "Training for the Ministry." It was in accordance with the recommendation of IMC that the NCC instructed its Committee on Theological Education¹⁶⁶ to investigate and report on the situation in India on the following points:

- a. Whether the existing relationship between theological and general education is satisfactory;
- b. Whether the present curricula and the period of training for the various grades of theological training need to be revised;
- c. Whether the existing facilities in various language areas are sufficient for the training of the different types of ministers needed;
- d. Whether adequate provision is being made for the care (spiritual and intellectual) of the men after they leave the seminary;
- e. What possibilities there are for giving higher theological training in the vernaculars;
- f. Whether adequate provision is being made to supply national teachers who could impart training in specialized branches of Theological Education.¹⁶⁷

The National Council was keen that its committee on theological education should make "a thorough study of the possibilities of co-operation in the work of training ministers all over India."¹⁶⁸ The actual survey commenced in 1942 and had three main stages in the enquiry: a) questionnaires, b) regional commissions and c) a central conference.¹⁶⁹ Preliminary questionnaires sent out to all institutions, churches and missions brought back large amounts of detailed and essential information which when assembled and classified gave the basis for the study. Eight regional commissions were organised to visit the theological institutions in their areas and to consult with church leaders in every part of the country through regional conferences on theological education. Regional reports were printed and circulated by the regional commissions and finally submitted to the NCC Committee on Theological Education which met in a three day central conference in November 1943. The findings

166. This committee was in existence from the year 1924 (when the NMC became the NCC), *ibid.*, p. 17.

167. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

168. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

169. *Ibid.*, pp 20-23.

and recommendations of the three day conference were printed and presented together with the regional reports to the ninth meeting of the NCC held in January 1944 as the *Interim Report on the Survey of Theological Education*.¹⁷⁰ Ranson notes that this work was done during a time of unusual difficulty in India, when the Second World War, the closing years of the colonial regime and the final struggle for national independence all took their toll on India.

The contribution to this study of Stephen Neill, the bishop of Tinnevely, was significant and "of outstanding value."¹⁷¹ He was closely associated with the initial planning of the investigation, acted as chairman of two regional commissions of Kerala and Karnataka and presided over the central conference as the chairman of the NCC Committee on Theological Education. In order to plan the continuation of the survey and the publication of an official report on theological education in India, the NCC executive in July 1944 released Charles W. Ranson to be the secretary of the NCC Committee on Theological Education and named Stephen Neill, GHC Angus and SN Talib-ud-Din as the editorial board. Neill, when he had to return to Britain for medical treatment, was replaced by Bishop Sandegren of Tranquebar and Bishop JW Pickett.

The report limits itself to the training of the ordained ministry, omitting its original intent to include the training of lay workers, voluntary workers and women.¹⁷² It welded the great mass of miscellaneous information assembled in the regional reports into a coherent and orderly structure. In the historical and descriptive first part, the report gives a brief account of the indigenous ministry, its training, an analysis of contemporary needs, an estimate of the demands of the immediate future upon the ministry, a detailed account of the faculties available and the recruitment pattern. Then the report "outlines proposals for the reconstruction of the whole system of Theological Education."¹⁷³ A decade after the 1931 Lindsay Commission report, co-operation was still identified as the key to successful reconstruction of theological education. Hence the report dealt with difficulties for co-operation and the way to overcome them, and proposed "a concrete plan for a fully co-operative system of theological education for India" approved and supported by the NCC and its

170. This volume (Nagpur, NCCI, 1943) contains the regional reports and was summarised in *The Christian Minister*.

171. *Christian Minister*, p. 23.

172. *Ibid.* pp 24, 27f.

173. *Ibid.*, pp 25-6.

Committee on Theological Education.¹⁷⁴

Further, the report discussed the responsibilities of the indigenous church and of the share of the older churches in the West in the task of training the ministry in India,¹⁷⁵ and concluded with a brief essay on the strategic importance of theological education,¹⁷⁶ saying

The example of our Lord and the experience... of His Church sustain the conviction that the strategic point in the missionary task is the preparation of Christian pastors and teachers. The concentration of adequate resources at this point is, humanly speaking, the only guarantee both of the Church's stability and of its power to meet widening opportunities.¹⁷⁷

In the plan for theological education proposed in the report, the following are identified as more significant by Samuel Amirtham:

- (1) Establishing one united theological school in each main language area of the country organized on the possible basis of co-operation....;
- (2) Following the ideal that "theological schools should attempt to do one work and one work only, and to do it thoroughly well," that being the purpose of training men for the work of the ordained ministry...;
- (3) Introducing a comprehensive curriculum;
- (4) Encouraging Indian teachers to pursue advanced study, mostly in the West but also creating opportunities here [in India].¹⁷⁸

(1) The report proposed that initially there should be twelve regional schools in India to serve the following language areas: Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese, Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya, Urdu, Santali, Oraon and Mundari.¹⁷⁹ Vernacular theological education faced a lack of enthusiasm from the people since it was "taken for granted that training in English was superior and training in the vernacular inferior."¹⁸⁰ Though, as indicated by the Sargent report on Post-War Educational

174. *Ibid.*, p. 26; see pp 166–191 for "co-operation" and pp 192–236 for the "plan."

175. *Ibid.*, pp 237–258.

176. *Ibid.*, pp 260–274.

177. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

178. See Samuel Amirtham, "Some Trends in the Development of Theological Education in India", *IJT*, 25:3 & 4, 1976, p. 199.

179. *Christian Minister*, p. 195.

180. Stephen Neill states this as "the psychological difficulty" for vernacular education in the *Interim Report on the NCC Survey of Theological Education*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1944, p. 9.

Development,¹⁸¹ the use of vernacular was steadily increasing at high school level, the proposal for vernacular theological education recognised that "theological training of the college grade...will be needed" "for a long period...in English...in India."¹⁸² It also recognised that "until the quality of vernacular theological training is improved the Church will suffer grievous weakness."¹⁸³ Vernacular theological education demanded vernacular theological literature. Hence the report proposed that

A full range of standard theological text-books is needed in each main language area, with supplementary theological literature of every kind. Translations of standard works in other languages and of the great formative Christian writings of every main period of the church's history are also needed. There is an immense and largely untouched task of theological writing and translation to be done in every language area in India...This is only one of the many theological tasks which await the scholar in India, but it is one of the most important.¹⁸⁴

(2) Since "the primary purpose of the theological school course is not to provide students with facilities for the academic study of theology or to turn them out as 'omnicompetent prefabricated' ministers,"¹⁸⁵ the

181. The Report of the Government of India's Central Advisory Board of Education on the *Post-War Educational Development in India*, 1944, was popularly known as the Sargent Report. It aimed at the creation of a system of education for India of "a standard comparable with those already attained in Great Britain and other Western countries before the war," *Christian Minister*, p. 77. For a summary of the principles of this plan, see EW Franklin, "The Sargent Scheme of Education," *NCCR*, LXIV: 8, Aug. 1944.

182. *Interim Report*, p. 7 and *Christian Minister*, p. 199.

183. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

184. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

185. *Ibid.*, p. 206. The phrase "omnicompetent prefabricated" is borrowed from a witty parody on the Major-General's song in *The Pirates of Penzance*, printed in the Lahore Diocesan Magazine of October 1944:

The Ultra-Modern Minister:
(Inspired by "Urbanus" and with apologies to WS Gilbert and to the Commission on Training for the Ministry)

I am an omnicompetent prefabricated minister,
My versatile dexterity is positively sinister.
Commissions on the ministry embellished my vocation,
By the potentialities of modern education.
To obviate "square pegginess" in occupations clerical
For orifices circular, you'll find me wholly spherical;
No modern technicalities for me can hold a mystery,
From puppetry to gardening, or metal work to history.

curriculum should so be revised that it is not simply a replica of the missionary's own theological training. It was said:

(i) that the theological school should aim directly and explicitly at the training of men for the work of the ordained ministry, and... (ii) that effective training for the ministry can best be achieved by a curriculum which is built around a solid core of biblical study and theological didache¹⁸⁶

and that the student be acquainted with the technique of study in the main branches of theology, and equipped to be able to study independently himself for the rest of his life.¹⁸⁷

(3) The curriculum should not be over-burdened by the addition of more new subjects. (But note "the addition to every subject of a background - that background that the living Church stretching down through the centuries and reaching out to a needy world.")¹⁸⁸ It was proposed that church history be brought up-to-date and related to the Indian church. The lack of books on the history of the church in India was pointed out as a handicap.¹⁸⁹ It was proposed that every student "be required to do a piece of research or special study in the history of the church in his own area."¹⁹⁰ With regard to religions, the report said,

This is one of the weakest spots in the knowledge of the Indian theological student. He will write far more intelligently on Apollinarianism than about the Arya Samaj or the Gita, and the

At singlestick or volley-ball, I'm cool as an icicle,
But very hot on lino-cuts or mending up a bicycle.
My universal chumminess is readily approachable,
And dancing (folk or ballroom) is completely irreproachable.
No art or science known to man I fail to show my skill in;
I dose my confirmation class with home-made penicillin.
I visit in an aeroplane and find my congregation
By electrically operated radiolocation.

In spite of all my knowledge of the realms of high technology
I can, if need require, descend to pastoral theology
But in manifold activities, or dexterous, or sinister,
I am the very model of the ultra-modern minister.

186. *Ibid.*, pp 203f.

187. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

188. *Ibid.*, p. 210. Quoted from John Foster, *Then and Now*, pp 139-140.

189. The India Church History Association has countered this with a multi-volume (5 completed) publication on Indian church history.

190. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

Koran, as a rule, he knows nothing about at all.¹⁹¹

It proposed to acquaint the students with the actual text of the great classics like the *Rig Veda*, the *Gita*, the *Koran*, etc., and to include courses on primitive religion, modern expressions of Hinduism and Islam, secular faiths and Communism. It recommended the establishing of a School of Hinduism on the same lines as the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies,¹⁹² in close association with an existing Christian theological or arts college.¹⁹³ It was also felt that Indian theological study was badly behind in the subject of worship. The value of studying and practising the worship styles of different traditions in an interdenominational college was emphasised.¹⁹⁴ The report went on to provide detailed recommendations for each language area.¹⁹⁵

(4) The report rightly took note of the importance of theological teachers in the whole process of theological education. It noted:

Far too much theological teaching is mere hack work, conducted by men who are so hard pressed that they have neither time nor energy for "scholarly research and keen reflection."¹⁹⁶

Hence it was proposed to secure further research study opportunities at post-graduate level both in India and in the West for Indian theological teachers. Also steps were to be taken to provide facilities for post-graduate study in Old Testament, New Testament, church history and Christian theology.¹⁹⁷ The fields of religions and practical theology were not specifically mentioned. But study of religions became significant with the after-effects of partition based on religion at Independence, and the attempt of fanatics among the majority Hindus to identify India as a Hindu

191. *Ibid.*, pp 212f.

192. The Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies is located at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. It was founded in 1929 as "a child of the NCC" under the influence of MT Titus (NCC secretary) and Dr. Samuel M Zwemer (American missionary to Muslims, based at Bahrain). HMI is "a Christian ecumenical institution to assist the Church in India to realise and fulfill its obligation of mission to Muslims by fostering among Christians an adequate and sympathetic understanding of Islam." It provides a staff team to lecture at seminars. Its official publications include the *HMI Bulletin* an English quarterly, *Mubashshir* an Urdu quarterly and *Interaction* an Occasional Newsletter.

193. *Ibid.*, pp 232f.

194. *Ibid.*, pp 213f.

195. *Ibid.*, pp 217-222.

196. *Ibid.*, p. 299. Already the Lindsay Commission took note of the university teachers, that unless they have some time to do new work and find things out, they are in danger of mere hack work.

197. *Ibid.*, pp 230f.

nation to the exclusion of other faiths. National Independence also aroused the church to align itself with the national concern for society and social issues. The formation of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in 1957¹⁹⁸ partly provided the avenue for research studies in the areas of religion and contemporary practical social questions.

The Ranson Report reiterated several aspects of what the Lindsay Commission had found as the case thirteen years earlier. As we noted already "much talk" after the Lindsay report did not result in actual action to revise the situation. "Most theological institutions have never achieved the stability and security of the Christian arts colleges."¹⁹⁹ Arts colleges received six times the funds received by theological institutions. They were benefiting from their affiliation with the universities which provided them "the stimulus of enforced conformity to regulations,...standards of entrance and of achievement."²⁰⁰ Theological institutions would only later obtain such wider affiliation and strength. Ranson also reports on uncertainty about numerous theological schools, which "have not really made up their minds as to the kind of ministry they want and the way it is to be trained."²⁰¹ They were small, inadequately staffed and catering to a handful of students, and "a considerable number" of them "simply disappeared or ceased to function" shortly after being founded.²⁰² On the whole, the Ranson Report repeats the same "somewhat drastic judgement" of the Lindsay Commission, as not much change had taken place during the war period.²⁰³

The limiting of much of theological education to the ordinands and the inability of the small number of ordinands to match the demands of ministry in a growing Indian church in the midst of an increasing Indian population very naturally necessitated and paved the way for numerous para-church lay ministries and their training programmes, often unrelated or ill-related to the ministry of the churches.

The NCC Committee on Theological Education faced a significant task in the following decades of the need to clarify (1) the self identity of the church; (2) the kind of ministry for which to train students; (b) the idea of mission which should be carried out in the ministry; and (c) the shape and scope of Christian ministries to meet contemporary Indian needs.

198. We consider CISRS in Chapter Five of this book.

199. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

200. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

201. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

202. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

203. *Ibid.*, pp 131-145.

The task became urgent as the church in India entered a new setting when India became an independent secular democracy in 1947.

7. Significant Events of the Year 1947: I. National Independence

1947 was a significant year for India. The long and "bitter struggle for political independence ended"²⁰⁴ and India became the largest secular democracy on earth on the 15th of August. The long debate and the process of negotiations for church union among Christian denominations in South India culminated in the formation of the Church of South India on the 27th of September.

There was no direct relationship between the two events. Yet it was appropriate that they should thus have coincided in time, since each was the culmination of a long process of search for dignity, freedom and responsibility, in which as in so many other countries in the third world the Church was some distance ahead of the state.²⁰⁵

The colonial era brought an unprecedented rise of education, literacy, scientific, technological and industrial advancement, modernization, urbanization and global awareness in India. Did they destroy the local culture or obtain a key to unlock the riches of age-old theologies and let loose nascent and progressive currents? Opinions differ. Three attitudes are identifiable among Indian thinkers on the Western cultural infiltration into India. Some saw it as nothing valuable or good, but only as harmful. Many believed it as salvific for India and proposed a process of complete transfusion. The introduction of English education by Alexander Duff and TB Macaulay initially aggravated a contempt for Indian culture and a desire to take on Western cultural patterns wholesale. Yet others, starting with Raja Ram Mohan Roy,

advocated a judicious synthesis of the new with the old, the Western with the Eastern, the scientific with the philosophical, in the cultural ferment that was already taking place.²⁰⁶

204. Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954, p. 339.

205. Stephen C. Neill, "The Relationship of Indian Christians in Political Affairs" in Peter Beyerhaus & Carl F Hallencreutz (eds.) *The Church Crossing Frontiers, Essays on the Nature of Mission in Honour of Bengt Sundkler*, Uppsala: Gleerup, 1969, p. 67. Cf. RC Majumdar, *An Advanced History of India*, London 1965, p. 889, on the Indian Association of Calcutta formed in 1876 by Surendranath Banerjea, a teacher at Duff's College at Calcutta, patterned after the Bengal Christian Association. See K Baago, "The First Independence Movement Among Indian Christians", *ICHR*, 1:1, June 1967, p. 65.

206. See DA Thangasamy, "A History of Christian Involvement in the Cultural

Rabindranath Tagore symbolised this trend in the International University of Viswa-bharathi, in which CF Andrews assisted as a teacher. Between the extremes of the unqualified disapproval of what the West brought to India and the unqualified eulogy of it, Jawaharlal Nehru chose the saner and more balanced view, saying,

We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature, which surrounds us in its infinite variety... We have to make our own all the achievement of the human race and join up with others in the exciting adventure of man.²⁰⁷

From Roy to Gopala Krishna Gokhale, a long line of prophets and leaders of Indian nationalism considered the British rule of India as a design of providence.²⁰⁸ The preamble to the constitution of the Servants of India Society expressed it, saying that its

Members frankly accept the British connection as ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of providence, for India's good.²⁰⁹

This view expressed itself in the writings and speeches of many leaders of the Indian National Congress in the early period.²¹⁰ From the very beginning Christian missionaries shared this idea of the providential character of British rule over India. Duff saw Britain as "the most highly favoured with the light and life of Revelation," the "most central kingdom" and the "most signally privileged...for dispensing blessings among the nations." India if "once lighted up by the lamp of salvation," he opined, "may become a spiritual pharos, to illumine more than half the population

Renaissance in Tamilnad" Section I. Cultural Renaissance in India, *RS*, XII:2, June 1965, p. 7.

207. *Ibid.*, p. 7; quoted from Nehru, *India Rediscovered*, pp 220 & 225.

208. See MM Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM Press, 1969, p. 240 (henceforth referred as *Acknowledged Christ*). Thomas quotes Roy's opinion: "British rule in India as due to a dispensation of providence" from HCE Zachariah's study of the Indian Renaissance from Roy to Gandhi, *Renascent India*, London 1933, p. 19.

209. *Acknowledged Christ*, p. 240; quoting Zachariah, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

210. Ranade spoke of the purpose of God as at work in the history of the Indian people, quoted in CF Andrews, *The Renaissance in India: Its Missionary Aspect*, London 1912, pp 138f. For a history of the Indian National Congress, see B Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress, 1885-1935* (with an Introduction by President Rajendra Prasad), Madras: Law Printing House for INC, 1935, pp 1038; Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: University Press, 1968, pp 416; Amaury de Reincourt, *The Soul of India*, London: Honeyglen Publishing Ltd., 1961, Chapter 18.

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of the globe." This to him was definitely "a grand design of providence."²¹¹ Similar sentiments were expressed by William Miller.²¹² CF Andrews lamented that this illumination took the method of conquest but felt that India needed "a strong external hand... to weld together again the broken fragments of a nation." To him, "educated India... tingling with new life... experiencing the beginning of a renaissance" was providential.²¹³ He saw

a continuity between the history of British Raj and that of Indian Nationalism, and interpreted the whole of that history including nationalism, within the framework of divine providence.²¹⁴

He made this the basis of his active support of Indian nationalism, which he considered a fruit of Western political and cultural impact made possible by the British Raj. Indian Christian leaders naturally followed this line of thought. KT Paul regarded nationalism of an aggressive and idolatrous nature as seen in the West as opposed to the Spirit of Christ but favoured nationalism as having "a designed place of necessity" "in the 'one increasing purpose' of God for mankind."²¹⁵ What is this purpose of God? How dominant was this purpose of God in the political, economic, social, cultural, religious and spiritual aggression of the West upon India? What KM Panikkar argued in reference to all of Asia in discussing the Western dominance over Asia is true of India:

At no point have the foundations of Asian life been touched; the thoughtful and educated classes have considered the Gospel, and, for all their respect for the person of Jesus, they have rejected it as a way of life. Asia is in process of rediscovering its own soul, and in the future will live spiritually by its own resources, and not by anything borrowed from outside.²¹⁶

Hindu India took Christian input to generate both the national

211. Alexander Duff, *India and Indian Missions, including sketches of the gigantic system of Hinduism both in theory and practice*, Edinburgh 1837, p. 26.

212. William Miller, *Indian Missions and How to View Them*, Edinburgh 1878, p. 16.

213. CF Andrews in *The Hindustan Review*, Allahabad, January 1907. This article was reprinted as a pamphlet. See *Acknowledged Christ*, p. 242.

214. *Acknowledged Christ*, p. 242.

215. KT Paul, *Christian Nationalism*, Speech at the All India Christian Conference at Cuttack, 1919, published as a pamphlet, 1921, pp 3f.

216. Quoted from KM Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, 1953 in SC Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, The Pelican History of the Church, volume 6, Penguin books, 1964, p. 560.

independence movement and nascent Hindu groups such as the Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and the Servants of India Society.²¹⁷ Hindu India had certainly been in the "process of rediscovering its own soul" to "live spiritually by its own resources." The rejection of the colonial regime and the obtaining of national independence has reinforced an Indian identity which in a way included a religious identity – India for Hindus and Pakistan for Muslims. The joy of independence was accompanied by the pains of partition based on religious identity, the assassination of MK Gandhi motivated by religious fanaticism²¹⁸ and the communal tendencies which reigned high in the nation, such as the tension relating to the place of the *harijan* poor, electoral policies for them and related conflicts between BR Ambedkar and Gandhi.²¹⁹ These raised fundamental questions on the role of religion in society, its place in politics, its affect on ethnic identities of people and its implications for the unity of mankind. Forced into a religiously pluralistic setting, young India had to sort out these issues.

Christians too were to sort out their own identity and role in the post-colonial Indian democracy. A majority of Asia, and India in particular, remain outside the church. Yet about 24 million Indians are Christians²²⁰ who do not consider their Christianity as "borrowed from outside." They attempt to unpack the components of the gospel for a redemptive intervention into their situation. Such an unpacking of the gospel in the Indian setting involves an understanding of the purpose of God.

What we referred to above as the purpose of God is the mission of God and the mission of the church. Once the church discovers the

217. JN Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements of India*, London 1918; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919, pp 471; DS Sarma, *Hinduism Through the Ages*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1973; *Acknowledged Christ*, Somen Das, "Christian Response to Some Selected Movements for Social Change in India in the 19th and 20th Centuries" in VK Samuel & C Sugden (eds.), *The Gospel Among our Hindu Neighbours*, Bangalore: PIM Asia and AETEI, 1983, pp 21–44.

218. Naram Godse, a member of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, shot Gandhiji on 28 January 1948. RSS is a fanatical Hindu movement claiming India for Hindus. See JA Curran, *Militant Hinduism in Hindu Politics: A Study of the R. S. S.*, New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951.

219. This is traced in TS Wilkinson & MM Thomas (eds.), *Ambedkar and the Neo-Buddhist Movement*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1972, pp 163.

220. David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of the Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900–2000*, Nairobi, Oxford & New York: OUP, 1982, pp 1010. Citation from the Indian section.

mission of God, she is enabled to take on her own role in that mission. As the church in India entered into the democratic setting of the Indian nation, she faced a new situation and a new challenge for her mission. She no longer could rely on a colonial power, but needed to cope with a national government addressing national situations and issues. To identify her mission in conjunction with the outburst of a newborn national aspiration to build a secular democracy became the urgent theological task.

The church in India had to operate from her minority status in the nation. In 1948 an Advisory Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Minorities was established by the government and Sardar Vallabhai Patel urged the majority community "to have confidence in the minority community" and exhorted it to conduct itself "in such a way as to win and retain the confidence of minorities."²²¹ That "everyone is equal in every way to everyone else" was reflected in the Constitution that was adopted on 26 January 1950.

The preamble of the Constitution began:

We, the people of India, having strongly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens JUSTICE, social, economic, political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the Nation;
in our Constituent Assembly do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution.²²²

Articles 15, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30 clearly stated the freedom for religious faith, practice and propagation.²²³

The theological task of identifying the purpose of God in India for the

221. Quoted in Thomas Pothacamury, *The Church in Independent India*, Bombay: Examiner Press, 1961, p. 7.

222. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 3.

223. Article 15: "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth. . ."

Article 25: "Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion. "

Article 26: "Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right: (a) to establish and

church was shared by church leaders, theologians and theological educators. Theological education needed to become the handmaid of the mission of the church in the nation. In order for the laity to be involved in their task of mission, the clergy were to train them; and the clergy needed prior training in their own grasp of the total mission of the church in democratic India. The context demanded a rethinking of the specific roles of mission, theology, ministry and ministerial training. The purpose of God for the church in India was variously interpreted and communicated by Indian theologians. Concepts such as evangelisation, humanisation and *lokasangraha*, describe the trends that arose.²²⁴ Mission and ministerial training were shaped by the way in which the purpose of God was understood within a church denomination or its theological school. Whereas such understanding could be predetermined for some of the smaller church groups by their founding parent missions in the West, the larger denominations which decided to form united indigenous national churches – such as initially the Church of South India and later the Church of North India – were under self-imposed pressure to think authentically through Indian realities in articulating their views on the purpose of God for the church in India. Their ecumenical fervour often demanded them to be holistic and relevant. Developments in this regard will be discussed in the following chapters. But now we should take a quick glance at the church union of 1947 and its effects.

maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law."

Article 28: No. 1: "No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds."

No. 3: "No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto."

Article 29: No. 2: "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language..."

Article 30: No. 1: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

No. 3: "The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language."

224. We shall deal with these concepts in the following chapters of this book.

8. Significant Events of the year 1947: II. Church Union

"Disunity of Christians," which remained "a public contradiction of the Gospel," was challenged in India.²²⁵ Bengt Sundkler in his volume *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union 1900-1947*²²⁶ describes the developments of the first half of the twentieth century. At a provisional synod at Vellore in October 1901, the Presbyterians, who were known as the Irish Presbyterians in Gujarat and Scottish Original Seceders in Central Provinces, were united in the Presbyterian Union. The Reformed Church of America, which worked in Vellore and Madurai areas, joined later. The Congregationalist Union, arising from the work of the London Missionary Society and the American Board, was formed at Madura in July 1905. These together became the South India United Church in 1908.²²⁷ The negotiations between the SIUC, the Anglicans and the British Methodists²²⁸ through the following decades, catalysed by the 1919 Tranquebar, the Lambeth and the IMC conferences and studies, culminated on the 27th of September 1947 when 290,000 members of the General Assembly of the SIUC, 500,000 Anglicans under the jurisdiction of the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon and 220,000 of the South Indian Provincial Synod of the Methodist Church (a total of 1,010,000) united together in one church, as the Church of South India.

While elsewhere the church continued the "public contradiction of the Gospel" by her disunity, the Christian church in South India recognised that only a reconciled church could credibly proclaim the enabling grace of the gospel to reconcile the factions within India. The inaugural address declared:

God has matched us with His hour; the Church of South India has an unparalleled opportunity. The reconciliation between our divergent elements...enables us with fresh conviction and force to proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation to all the clashing elements in this nation's life.²²⁹

225. Lesslie Newbigin in a radio broadcast, 13 October 1953; quoted by RD Paul, *The First Decade: An Account of the CSI*, Madras: CLS, 1958, p. 1.

226. London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.

227. *Ibid.*, pp 36-49.

228. We specify British Methodists, since the American Methodists chose to stay outside the negotiations and still remain a separate group known as the Methodist Church in India.

229. Sundkler, *op. cit.*, p. 339. For an account of the inaugural of the CSI, at St. George's Cathedral, Madras, see Sundkler, *Ibid.*, RD Paul, *op. cit.*, pp 19-37; RD Paul, "The Inauguration and After," in *The Madras Diocesan Magazine*,

Reconciliation is both a prerequisite as well as an aspect of the mission of the church in India.

The Derby Report of 1946²³⁰ criticised the proposed union as neither sufficiently Indian nor sufficiently radical, and said

The scheme as it now stands suggests too much an attempt to reconcile divergent Western traditions, instead of asking rather what form of faith and of catholic order an indigenously Indian Church ought to be developing...Instead of taking for granted the need to combine the "contributions" of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Congregationalist traditions, its authors might in more radical fashion have sought to go behind and beneath all these to the form of the Church as it appears in the Bible and in the early centuries.²³¹

Is it possible for the modern day church to identify "the form of the Church as it appears in the Bible and in the early centuries" and to apply that form to itself? Could the church in India or for that matter any church anywhere, free itself from the effects and values of the nearly two thousand years of church history? As Kaj Baago argued, it is impossible to wipe off the history and to start afresh with the Apostles' Creed,²³² though some have attempted just that. Nineteenth century India saw a few such starts such as the Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus (1858), the National Church of Madras (1886) and the Christo Samaj of Calcutta (1887).²³³

December 1947, p. 29; Michael Hollis, *The Significance of South India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1966, pp 80; Douglas Webster, *What is this Church of South India?* London: The Highway Press, 1954, pp 31; CS Milford, *South India's New Church*, London: Edinburgh House Press, 1947, pp 20 and *Facts on India and the Church; 2. South India*, Edinburgh: The Church of Scotland Overseas

230. The Archbishop of Canterbury appointed a committee of theologians in the year 1946, to consider the proposed basis of union and constitution of the future Church of South India, under the chairmanship of Dr. AEJ Rawlinson, Bishop of Derby. The committee was "overweighted on the critical side" as per *The South India Church: An Open Letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Bishop Neill*, p. 10, quoted in Sundkler, *op. cit.*, pp 335 & 419. This committee's report was known as the Derby Report.

231. Quoted from the Derby Report, *The South India Church Scheme*, London, 1946 in Sundkler, *op. cit.*, pp 346-349.

232. Kaj Baago, "The First Independence Movement among Indian Christians," *ICHR*, 1:1, June 1967, p. 77.

233. *Ibid.*, pp 69-76. Cf. Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: CLS for CISRS (Confessing the Faith in India Series no. 4), 1969; henceforth referred as *Pioneers*. Baago quotes Joseph Mullens, *A Brief Review of Ten Years Missionary Labour in India*, London 1863, pp 51ff; *Statistical Tables of*

The attempts of Parani Andi, Kali Charan Banerjea and Krishna Mohan Banerjea to construct indigenous theology and worship were short lived in influence. The twentieth century saw radical voices argue for a church without boundary.²³⁴ At the 1915 Madras Missionary Conference, Advocate O Kandaswamy Chetty argued why he was not a Christian, saying that when a Hindu remains within the Hindu society even after realising Jesus Christ as his saviour, he has a better chance of preparing the way for a movement from within Hindu society towards Christ, influencing more Hindus to experience Jesus Christ.²³⁵ Following the thoughts of EP Rice, JN Farquhar, William Miller, TE Slater and Bernard Lucas, OK Chetty formed the "Fellowship of the Followers of Jesus" to provide a sense of unity and fellowship among those who believed in Jesus but did not join the Christian church through baptism and church membership.²³⁶ Here was an attempt to remove the separating wall of institutional churches in order that Hindu India could feel inside the salvation God offered in Christ. KT Paul was anxious to define the church "in the widest possible terms" and deprecated any attempt to understand it "merely as an ecclesiastical organization."²³⁷

The Rethinking Group in Madras²³⁸ took the Indian setting seriously

the Protestant Missions in India, Burma and Ceylon, Calcutta 1892, p. 28; Annual Reports and Collection of Papers of the National Church of India, Madras, 1893.

234. This is similar to the view and concern expressed by MM Thomas, when he says, "...it is difficult...to see how the boundary of the Church of Christ is to be defined in relation to the Common Humanity in Christ. Probably there is no defined boundary." See Paul Löffler, *Secular Man and Christian Mission*, Geneva: CWME/WCC, 1968, p. 16.

235. OK Chetty's speech is reprinted from *Madras Christian College Magazine*, 1915, pp 352ff, in *Pioneers*, pp 207-214.

236. *Pioneers*, p. 83. Cf. *Madras Mail* 6-4-1933 and *Guardian* 13-4-1933.

237. See *HF*, January 1912, p10.

238. This group consisted of unorthodox but highly stimulating thinkers who published a collection of their articles as a book titled *Rethinking Christianity in India* (edited by DM Devasahayam & AN Sudarisanam, Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938, pp 224 + 54) in response to Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: EHP, 1938). See Chakkarai's "The Church;" Chenchiah's "The Church and the Indian Christian" and "Religion in Contemporary India," *ibid.*, pp 101-123, 81-100 & 201-215. Cf. PT Thomas, *The Theology of Chakkarai*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1968; DA Thangasamy, *The Theology of Chenchiah*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1967 and his articles: "Significance of Chenchiah and His Thought" and "Chenchiah's Understanding of Jesus Christ" in *RS*, X:3, 1963 & XI:3, 1964. See also *A Christian Theological Approach to Hinduism*, Gurukul Theological Research Group, Madras, 1956.

and suggested what appeared a churchless Christianity.²³⁹ Chenchiah held that the church and its doctrines were hindrances to evangelism in India and what mattered was the raw fact of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth which came in the Spirit. He condemned the institutional church as usurping the place of the kingdom of God. Much later MM Thomas stated similarly that

...it is difficult... to see how the boundary of the Church of Christ is to be defined in relation to Common Humanity in Christ. Probably there is no defined boundary.²⁴⁰

Among Roman Catholic theologians there arose an increasing tendency to not only identify but to make room for an anonymous Christianity.²⁴¹

Such churchless Christianity is feared as a threat initially to the church and eventually to the gospel itself. This raises the question of the nature of the church; ecclesiology emerges as a significant issue for the Indian church.²⁴² Is the church in India free to explore her own identity? How much of that identity is to be shaped by factors such as the biblical blueprint, early church history, reformation ecclesiology and the Indian setting itself? How rigidly should the "church as an institution" be understood? These and many more questions demand an answer.

239. Similar to the "Religionless Christianity" of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Cf. Herbert Jai Singh, "Rethinking Church in India," *RS*, X:4, 1963, pp 9-16, wherein Jai Singh considers and rejects the option of churchless Christianity.

240. See Paul Löffler, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

241. For an understanding of the concept of Anonymous Christianity, see Eric J Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, London: SCM, 1977, Chapter 9, pp 118-131. Sharpe traces the development of this concept from the "sadly repetitive" and "romantically impressionistic" work of Raymond Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964; Karl Rahner's "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions" in *Theological Investigations*, Volume V, (Eng. tr.) Helicon Press; Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966; Anita Roper, *The Anonymous Christian* (Eng. tr.), Sheed and Ward, 1966; Eugene Hillman, *The Wider Ecumenism*, 1968; and the criticisms against this concept from H Van Straelen, *The Catholic Encounter with World Religions*, 1966 and Klaus Klostermaier, *Hindu and Christian in Vrindavan*, 1969.

242. For an understanding of ecclesiology in India, see Lionel Mascarenhas, "The Changing Face of Ecclesiology", *IJT*, 26:1, January-March 1977, pp 1-11; Mathai Zachariah (ed.), *The Church: A People's Movement*, Nagpur: NCCI Study Department, 1975, pp 120 and *The Local Congregation: Its Mission in India*, Delhi: ISPCK for NCCI & the Ecumenical Development Centre of India, 1982, pp 140. Cf. John Thanickal and S. Arles, "AICOME's Theological Significance," *TRACI Journal*, May 1977, pp 38-42.

The self understanding of the church is vitally important to the mission of the church. That in turn determines the shape of the ministry and its training. Hence for the purpose of this book, the type of ecclesiological self-understanding that motivated the pioneers of the CSI movement bears much relevance. Whereas the above pursuits focus attention on those outside the Church, the CSI essentially concerned itself with those within the boundaries of the existing churches in South India. The desire for unity was felt keenly by missionaries who found "divisions" intolerable in the context of the mission field.²⁴³ No less effective were the native voices from India which demanded unity.²⁴⁴ We have a history of this from William Carey to the year 1947 available in the form of articles, minutes, conference reports and books.²⁴⁵ The CSI, a natural culmination of this trend, was overwhelmed with the task of feeding the existing flock and it initially focused its attention on the training of the Christian minister, the pastor for the local congregation. We already noted from the Tambaram Report that there was considerable need for full-time pastoral leaders for existing congregations:

Year after year the Church in India received very large additions

243. Cf. Lesslie Newbigin, "The Call to Mission – A Call to Unity?" in Peter Beyerhaus & Carl F Hallencreutz (eds.), *The Church Crossing Frontiers*, Uppsala: Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XI, 1969, (pp 254–265) p 254; and Kaj Baago, "The First Independence Movement..." *op.cit.*, p 78.

244. Beside the names already referred we should note the example of Pandita Ramabai who did desire "one united Christian church – an indigenous national church" for India. See Nalini Arles, "Pandita Ramabai and Amy Carmichael, A Study of Their Contributions Towards Transforming the Position of Indian Women," M.Th. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1986, pp 85–87; cf. SM Adhav, *Pandita Ramabai*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1979, p 115; AB Shaw (ed.), *The Letters and Correspondence of Pandita Ramabai*, Bombay: Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, 1977, p 335.

245. See William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations, A History of the IMC and its Nineteenth Century Background*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952; Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, London: SPCK, 1954; JH Maclean, "Unity and Co-operation in the Indian Mission Field," *IRM* 1:2, April 1912, pp 202–225; Reports of the Decennial General and the South India Missionary Conferences of India; "The India National Conference of the Edinburgh Continuation Committee," *HF* XXXIII, 1913, pp 6–14; H Gulliford, "The Influence of Edinburgh on India," *HF* XXXIV 1914, pp 43–52; Herbert Anderson, "The NMC of India" *Ibid.*, pp 330–337; AC Mukerji, "The Movement Towards Unity in the Indian Christian Church and the Ideal of a National Church," Paper presented at the Missionary Conferences at Lucknow and Benares, 18 November – 2 December 1912, *HF*, April 1913, pp 148–156.

through conversions from Hinduism. Some hundreds of new congregations are being formed every year, calling for the appointment of ministers and pastors.

... the need for more and better qualified ministers to the existing congregations as well as the rapidly increasing number of new congregations is very great and very urgent.²⁴⁶

The situation had not changed within the decade except that the Ranson study had furthered the understanding of the need and suggested plans for the future. The early challenge to the synod and diocesan ministerial boards of the CSI was to accomplish the proposals of the Lindsay, Tambaram and Ranson reports. Whereas the emphasis was on the preparing of pastors for the local churches, a small fraction of those trained went into the mission fields outside the boundaries of the existing church. The training of laity and of women took a secondary place at this initial period.²⁴⁷

The Lindsay and Ranson studies had already given the overall guidelines for what should happen in the fields of Christian higher education and theological education in India.²⁴⁸ Earlier at institutions like the Bangalore United Theological College²⁴⁹ and the Serampore College,²⁵⁰ students from all the different denominations were training themselves for ministry within their divided churches. Church union, achieved in 1947, furthered the validity of the recommendations of the Lindsay and Ranson reports, in that the uniting churches were challenged to consolidate their theological small schools into union colleges. Regional and vernacular theological colleges began to be formed, such as the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary at Madurai, Andhra Christian Theological College at Hyderabad, Kerala United Theological Seminary at Trivandrum and Karnataka Theological College at Mangalore within the regions covered by the CSI. Following the patterns at UTC, Bangalore, where several missions put their resources to develop a better equipped theological library, faculty and campus to serve all the church groups

246. Tambaram Report, volume 4: *The Life of the Church*, London: OUP for IMC, 1939, p. 230.

247. See CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, pp 24 & 271.

248. See Lindsay Commission Report *Christian Higher Education in India*, London: OUP, 1931; and Charles W Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946.

249. See section 2 of this chapter.

250. See section 1 of this chapter.

with an ecumenical perspective in English medium, the regional colleges were now to offer similar avenues for better vernacular theological education in ecumenical perspective. We shall consider one of these regional colleges, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary at Madurai, as an example of what developed in the later decades as well as trace the developments within the Church of South India.

The two significant events of 1947, national independence and church union, aroused the church in India to actively develop her self-identity, to form regional and vernacular union institutions with an ecumenical perspective and to identify her mission in India with fresh vigour, in order that her ministry could be trained to meet the real needs of the people of India. The road did not prove smooth. Theological divergence soon followed. Questions were raised and multiple perspectives were explored: What is mission? What are the priorities in mission? How to minister? How to train the minister? Who should minister? How to indigenise? In the process of pursuing a relevant self-understanding, theological education travailed to alter the "potted plant" existence. This study traces macro-developments with select case studies on institutions and trends to bring together from the huge corpus of historical material a concise account to illustrate that the church and her institutions are alive and active in their pursuit after a relevant theology of mission, modes of ministry and ventures of training within the secular democracy of India.

PART TWO

Theology of Mission in the Indian Church

Preface to Part Two

We noted how the larger churches in South India came together into union in the Church of South India in 1947.¹ Still in the South there remained large units of Christian population under separate identities, such as the Syrian Orthodox, Lutheran, American Methodist, Baptist, Brethren, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal and others, beside the larger Roman Catholic group. A similar union gathered momentum and culminated in the North in 1970, forming the Church of North India.² It succeeded in drawing the Disciples of Christ and some Baptist groups into the union, yet also leaving large units outside the union. If a reconciled church alone could help reconcile the factions in India, the Indian church needed other means of reconciliation and fellowship than church union. It was here that the National Christian Council of India³ became valuable for the churches in providing an alternative unifying agency for cooperative action and representation.

To trace the development of the church's self understanding and indigenous theology of mission, we must scrutinize the many reports of the studies, consultations, seminars, symposia and conferences of the NCC through its institutions and publications. We took note of the Lindsay and Ranson reports from the pre-Independence period which dealt with the role, need and significance of Christian higher and theological

1. For an account of the history of the CSI, see Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.

2. For an account of the history of the CNI, see DM Kennedy, "The CNI History," *ICHR*, VI: 2, 1972 & VII:1, 1973; WJ Marshall, *Faith and Order in the North India/Pakistan Plan*, London: Friends of CNI, 1978; Bishop Donald Kennedy criticizes that there is no CNI history equivalent to Sundkler's work on the CSI. See his *Light from Any Quarter? Ecumenical-Evangelical Studies in World Christian Mission*, Belfast: Ulster Services, 1982, p. 5.

3. For an account of the history of the NCCI, see Kaj Baago, *The History of the National Christian Council of India, 1914-1964*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1965, p 27 (henceforth *NCCI History*).

education.⁴ During those pre-Independence years it was observed that "the revolutionary spirit of the young Indian church was scarcely present in the [National] Council."⁵ But the obtaining of national independence altered the scene. Democracy being the rule of the majority, it was predetermined that the 80% Hindu majority would rule over the nation and the religious minorities would have to fend for their rights and work with the majority community. The National Council held together the historical Protestant and the Orthodox churches within the Christian minority. It also gave a common identity and voice to them to represent their views to the majority government. Roman Catholics formed a larger section of the Christian minority and held a separate identity, and there were those new Protestant missions and denominations which did not identify with the NCC. The tendency to alter Christian identity into a political communal identity was favoured within most Christian circles. But it was recognised that

The Christian interest cannot be narrowly communal. The church is concerned with the purpose of God for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ.⁶

Individual leaders like KT Paul opposed communal representation as did some churches, such as the Methodist Episcopal Church which at its central conference at Kanpur in 1931 declared against communal politics. But in Kerala Christians virtually developed into a political party.⁷ Though a minority community, Christians were significant because of their literacy level, institutions of educational, medical and social services and their basic attitude for service to society. The post-Independence setting in the nation placed newer demands on the church to go about her services – dissolving and diffusing into the nation as "salt and light" constrained by her faith. The way to go about this diffusion, the type of services to render and the *modus operandi* were thought through with a sense of urgency even within the first decade of national independence. We shall have to cull from available literature the components which go to form the sort of theology of mission that was taking shape in the Indian church during this period.

4. See *Lindsay Commission Report: Christian Higher Education in India*, London: OUP, 1931; and CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946.

5. See *NCCI History*, p. 63.

6. See PD Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.), *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: NCCI & CISRS, 1960, preface p. iii (henceforth *Nation Building*).

7. See *NCCR*, 1931, p. 91; *NCCI History*, p. 39.

Though a biblical theology is developed from Christian Scripture, indigenous interpretation makes it contextual theology. Theology of mission is the most significant area of such development and interpretation. Indian Christianity has attempted to develop and interpret such indigenous theology right from its arrival in India. First we shall identify the sources of those developments, and then consider the post-Independence shaping of the indigenous theology of mission. There are two main streams of this mission theology: the ecumenical and the evangelical. The history of their developments are linked with life and thought developments of certain individuals and movements. We shall consider these in the following order:

1. Development of Indigenous Christian Theology in India
2. The Significance of Paul David Devanandan
3. The Significance of M.M. Thomas
4. The Contribution of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
5. The Contribution of the Ecumenical Christian Centre
6. The Implications of Inter-Faith Dialogue
7. The Significance of the Evangelical Fellowship of India

CHAPTER TWO

Development of Indigenous Christian Theology in India

To begin with, the church in India imitated the Western churches and absorbed Western theologies as a whole. This prevented her from an authentic self-understanding in terms of the theological and resultant missiological task in India. The exceptional few who attempted to articulate an indigenous theology, the situations and factors which motivated them, the theological conceptions they proposed and the struggles they went through with the traditionalists, are all summarised in three books published in the year 1969 (*Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*¹ by Kaj Baago, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*² by Robin HS Boyd and *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*³ by MM Thomas). Reviewing the first two works, DA Thangasamy comments that they "dovetail into each other in both aim and content" linking in parallel accounts on Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya and Sadhu Sundar Singh.⁴ Baago restricts himself to the exploratory beginnings, whereas Boyd surveys the whole development with special emphasis on the later masters, painstakingly tracing the elements in their theological thinking, common and otherwise, interpreting and evaluating them. Baago's pioneering period covers from 1858, the Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus, the Calcutta Christo Samaj, the National Church of Parani Andi, through KM Banerjea, AS Appasamy, Brahmabandav and Sundar Singh to Kandaswamy Chetti and the missionary pioneers such as Slater, Farquhar, Miller and Lucas, ending roughly around 1930. He finds it more appropriate to extend the pioneering period to the sixties including AJ Appasamy, Chenchiah and Chakkarai as a second line of pioneers. Boyd agrees and deals with them and also includes a treatment of the

1. Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969, pp. 214 (henceforth *Pioneers*).

2. Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969, pp. 285; 1975 revised edition pp. 352 (henceforth *ICT*).

3. London: SCM Press, 1969, pp. 340 (henceforth *AC*).

4. See DA Thangasamy's Review Article "Theological Pioneering in India" in *RS* XVII:1, March 1970, p. 75.

theological constructs and contributions of a third line of pioneers, PD Devanandan, MM Thomas and others. Sifting through the rich content of what is developed as Indian Christian Theology, he vehemently rejects "the jibe that the Indian Church has so far failed to produce even a heresy" as "patently misleading"⁵ and heralds that

Indian Christian theology has arrived! It is far from negligible in volume, it is marked by a lively concern to grapple with the problems of witnessing to the Gospel in the Indian cultural environment, and it represents a wide variety of traditions and viewpoints... The Indian Church has demonstrated many new insights into the fundamental truths of the faith, aided – as the Church has never been aided since its earliest days – by a rich and flexible terminology whose resources have not hitherto been brought into the treasury of Christian theology.⁶

Boyd seems to agree with Zaehner's spectacular identification of Indians:

We are faced with two chosen people, not one; for, whereas Europe and the Near East owe their religion directly or indirectly to the Jews, further Asia owes hers directly or indirectly to the Indians.⁷

We shall not discuss the validity of this point, but note Boyd's view that after the first encounter with Jewish culture and the second with the Greco-Roman cultural setting, Christianity's third and final confrontation is to be with Hindu culture, resulting in the development of new terminology and new insights and visions, "not only" for Indian Christianity, but "the Christian traditions of the whole world."⁸ Though India has an 11% Muslim population, Indian Christian theology is predominantly talked of as emerging from its confrontation with the dominant Hindu cultural environment, shaped by the nebulous 80% of the national population, which is nearly thirty times larger than the Indian Christian total.

In his work, MM Thomas attempts to acknowledge the presence of Christ as the motivating force in all that was taking place in India in the cultural, social, educational, political and religious renaissance during the Great Century and after. He draws comfort in identifying the influences of Christ and the gospel on Roy, Sen, Day, Goreh, Mozoomdar.

5. See GV Job's comment: "The Christian movement in India has no theology, not even an indigenous heresy to show that serious thoughts relating to the deep mysteries of the Christian faith are simmering in its mind," *Rethinking Christianity in India*, Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938, p. 15.

6. ICT, p. 255.

7. See RC Zaehner, *At Sundry Times*, 1958, pp. 165ff.

8. ICT, pp. 255–257.

Brahmabandhav, Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi and others; and puts together a theology of national renaissance, summarising the early attempts at a socio-politically sensitive indigenous theologising on the part of Indian Christians.⁹

In his critical analysis of the development of indigenous theology in India, Russell Chandran observes several stages in the attempt to interpret Christian faith elements in relation to "the Indian religious, cultural and philosophic situation."¹⁰ In the first stage, Western missionary theologians had to rethink the "totally negative approach to other faiths and cultures" which most early Christian missions and missionaries exhibited from their insular world view.¹¹ They believed that "missionaries were sent out to exterminate heathenism in India, not to spread heathen nonsense all over Europe."¹² Robert de Nobili and Bartholomew Ziegenbalg differed from this general attitude. Robert de Nobili held that "the only way to make Christianity acceptable to caste Hindus was to present it as a universal religion, not as the religion of *parangis*." He proposed the replacement of Latin by Sanskrit, while showing a sensitivity to vernacular principles already in the seventeenth century.¹³ Ziegenbalg wrote in 1710:

I do not reject everything they teach, rather rejoice, that for the heathen long ago a small light of the Gospel began to shine.

He went on to say that he wanted his reader in Europe

to see how far they had come by the light of their reason in the knowledge of God and of the natural order, and how by their natural powers, they often put to shame many Christians by their upright life, also showing a much greater striving for the future life.¹⁴

9. Thomas considers his work as parallel to Raymond Panikkar's *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964); and claims that he is "innocent of any ambition to be a systematic theologian;" see preface.

10. See JR Chandran, "Development of Christian Theology in India: A Critical Survey," *BTF* VIII:2, 1976, p. 140; henceforth ICT Survey. The same was presented at the Dar-es-salaam Conference forming the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians (EATWoT) and published in its report: Sergio Torres & Virginia Fabella (eds.), *The Emergent Gospel – Theology from the Underside of History*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978, pp 157–172.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

12. Quoted from AH Francke (1663–1727) of Halle University by Arno Lehmann, *It Began at Tranquebar*, Madras: CLS, 1956, p. 32.

13. Chandran quotes from Vincent Cronin, *A Pearl to India: The Life of Robert de Nobili*, London: Hart Davis, 1959, p. 168.

14. Lehmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 31f.

The discovery and interpretation of the Hindu, Buddhist and other religious scriptures by the great Orientalists Max Muller, Paul Deussen, AA Macdonnell, Arthur Berridale Keith and others immensely influenced Christian missionary thinking. It led to a rethinking of the Christian approach to other religions. Such rethinking did not necessitate a reformulation of basic Christian doctrines. TE Slater, Sydney Cave, EW Thompson, AG Hogg and others along with JN Farquhar held that "the positive appraisal of several aspects of Hindu faith and practice was based on the acceptance of the traditional Christian doctrines as the criteria for evaluation."¹⁵ The rethinking had to do with the attitudes and understanding of the Hindu faith elements and scripture.

Theological response from outside the church was found in the writings and concepts of Ram Mohan Roy and KC Sen.¹⁶ Though Sen moved away from Roy's Unitarian views and expounded a trinity with the Indian *Saccidananda* concept¹⁷ and claimed reconciliation through the blood of the crucified Jesus, neither he nor others identified him as a Christian. Sen attempted to redefine the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy and membership of the church.¹⁸ Swami Vivekananda, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Mahatma Gandhi called upon "Christianity to take its place within a harmony of all religions."¹⁹

Within such a setting the church in India attempted a self-understanding led by the above mentioned indigenous theologians. Men like Brahmabandhav believed "Christian theology could be reformulated in India using the categories of Indian philosophy." He wrote:

Indian thought can be made just as useful to Christianity as Greek thought has been to Europe....The truths of the Hindu philosopher must be baptised and used as stepping stones to the catholic faiths....The European clothes...should be laid aside as soon as

15. See JN Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, London: OUP, 1915.

16. Cf. AC, pp. 1-81; ICT, pp. 19-39.

17. See ICT, p. 34. Sen "gives a sort of table of equivalents or parallels, beginning with the Christian Trinity and ending with *Saccidananda*:"

Father	Son	Holy Spirit
The Creator	The Exemplar	The Sanctifier
The Still God	The Journeying God	The Returning God
"I am"	"I love"	"I save"
Force	Wisdom	Holiness
True	God	Beautiful
<i>Sat</i> (Truth)	Cit (Intelligence)	Ananda (Joy)

18. ICT, p. 144.

19. ICT, p. 145; AC, pp. 110-238.

possible. It must assume the Hindu garment which will make it acceptable to the people of India. This change can only be effected by Indian missionary orders who preach the sacred Faith in the language of the Vedanta.²⁰

Bishop AJ Appasamy promoted a *bhakti* slant in the understanding of theology, spirituality, revivalism and evangelical piety. In *Christianity as Bhakti Marga*, *The Gospel and India's Heritage* and *The Theology of Hindu Bhakti*, he endeavours to interpret Christian faith using the categories of Indian religious and philosophical traditions.²¹ Influenced by Aurobindo Ghose's reinterpretation of Vedanta on the lines of the Bergsonian philosophy of emergent evolution, Chenchiah of the Rethinking Group developed his raw fact of Christ – the new man. He too "stressed the importance of restating the Christian faith in Indian categories, liberating Christian doctrines from the language of Greek philosophy and categories of Western thought and culture."²² Like KM Banerjea, he was of the view to show parallels from the Indian religious scriptures to the Old Testament.²³

Brahmabandhav, Appasamy and Chenchiah attempt to interpret the Christian gospel in terms of a particular stream of Indian thought – Sankara's *advaita*, Ramanuja's *visishtadvaita* and Aurobindo's reinterpretation of *Vedanta*. Without any such philosophical affiliation, Chakkarai also attempts reinterpreting the Christian gospel from his doctrine of the Christhood of God. He uses Indian terminology for it, referring to incarnation as the *avyakta* becoming *vyakta* (unmanifest Brahman becoming manifest Isvara in Jesus Christ), the *sat purusa* (the true man), who himself was the *mulapurusa* (the original man), whom we experience through the *antaryamin* (the indweller), the Holy Spirit. In the suffering of Jesus on the cross starts the *kriya sakti* (active energy) of a new world order and in Jesus' *niskamya karma* act of self-abnegation as taught in the Gita, new life begins for all.²⁴ Chakkarai suggests that the *karma marga* (way of law) of the Jews and the *jnana marga* (way of wisdom) of the Greeks are now transformed and fulfilled in the *bhakti*

20. Boyd quotes Brahmabandhav, *ICT*, p. 64.

21. *ICT Survey*, p. 147; *ICT*, pp. 110–143.

22. *ICT Survey*, p. 149; *ICT*, pp. 144–164.

23. *ICT Survey*, p. 149; *Pioneers*, pp. 12–17; see KM Banerjea, *Arian Witness*, Calcutta, 1875.

24. All references are from Chakkarai's *Jesus the Avatar*, Madras: CLS, 1932. See *ICT*, pp. 165–185; PT Thomas, *The Theology of Chakkarai*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1968; GC Oosthuizen, *Theological Discussions and Confessional Developments in the Churches of Asia and Africa*, Holland: Franeker, 1958.

marga (way of devotion) of the cross of Christ.²⁵

Chandran points to increasing evidence through indigenous attempts at interpretation in the second half of the twentieth century that

a theology which will serve the cause of the Church's mission in India has to take account of both "the faith once for all given," received through the different theological formulations of the past, and the discernment of the reality of the Risen Christ in the different frontiers of the Church's mission.²⁶

The most obvious frontier where this reality of Christ should be realised in India is the church in her mission with the people of other living faiths.²⁷ Whereas "displacement of other religions by Christianity" was the goal of the church's mission in the past, *dialogue* with people of other faiths with a view to unmask the "hidden," "unknown," "unbound" and the already present Christ is increasingly proposed as the goal of Christian mission to people of other faiths in India.²⁸ A pioneer who made significant contributions to this indigenous theological development was PD Devanandan. He promoted living dialogue with individuals and groups through his writings²⁹ as well as CISRS programmes. In democratic India, he saw a real struggle among Hindu leaders in effecting a synthesis between a traditional world view and contemporary secularism, and emphasised it as a missionary opportunity to spell out the good news of God incarnate in Jesus Christ in relation to this synthesis of the traditional and the contemporary.³⁰ He recommended, since "God's redemptive activity in Jesus Christ" "is not so much by total destruction...but by radical renewal of what we cherish as valuable," Christian mission should use "dominant philosophical and religious concepts of non-Christian faiths"

25. *ICT*, p. 179.

26. *ICT*, Survey p. 149.

27. *Ibid.*

28. These concepts are taken from JN Farquhar (*The Crown of Hinduism*, op. cit.), Raymond Panikkar (*The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, op. cit.), Stanley Samartha (*The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1974); and DT Niles (*Upon the Earth: The Mission of God and the Missionary Enterprise of the Church*, London: 1962). All these concepts do not necessarily present the same views. An integral understanding is sought utilising acceptable parts of them in the process of developing a theology of dialogue in the Indian setting.

29. See particularly Devanandan's *The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual* (CISRS, 1959), *The Gospel and Renascent Hinduism* (London: SCM Press, 1959), *Christian Concerns in Hinduism* (CISRS, 1961) and *Preparation for Dialogue* (CISRS, 1964).

30. *ICT Survey*, p. 150.

as "instruments of interpretation of the Gospel."³¹ Chandran commends and agrees with Devanandan in this conviction that

Indian Christian Theology would develop its own distinctive character only through the interpretation of the "once for all delivered faith" in dialogue with people of other faiths.³²

Similarly, Panikkar in a spirit of genuine dialogue seeks to understand Hinduism from within and arrives at the conclusion "Christ is already present in Hinduism, though he is not known as Christ."³³ He sees what he names a "theandric synthesis" of the three *margas* and relates it to trinity and to world religions and suggests Christ as the key in interpreting them.³⁴ For Panikkar, as also for other Catholic theologians such as Abhishiktananda, interiority of religious experience in the "cave of the heart" and the sharing of it is the common ground of religious dialogue.³⁵ Chandran criticises this as inadequate for the purposes of Christian mission, as this could lead to purely subjective interpretations. He argues that

For the dialogue approach to be truly faithful to the mission of Jesus Christ it cannot be exclusively limited to the sphere of interiority of religious experience. Personal as well as corporate religious experience has to be related to the total human experience, including the social and political struggles of the human community.³⁶

An interesting further development in indigenous theology is its tendency to promote and to be shaped by *dialogue with people not only of faith, but of no faith*, on matters of *social concern* in the context of struggles for *liberation* from different forms of oppression. The central in this trend is "the role of the Gospel in relation to man's quest for a meaningful existence through the struggle for *justice*."³⁷ A good example of this trend of theology is that of MM Thomas, who notes three levels of dialogue:

First there is the dialogue which studies the contribution of each faith to man and society – a secular conversation which should lead on to the possibility of a common culture – not a "Christian"

31. Devanandan, *Preparation for Dialogue*, op. cit., p. 191.

32. *ICT Survey*, p. 151.

33. See Panikkar's *Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, op. cit.

34. See Panikkar's *The Trinity and World Religions*, Madras: CLS, 1970.

35. See Swami Abhishiktananda, *The Hindu Christian Meeting Point, In the Cave of the Heart*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1976.

36. *ICT Survey*, p. 152.

37. *Ibid.*

culture but an "open" culture based on a common humanity. Secondly...to come to grips with the central theological issues of each of the faiths. And thirdly....the dialogue "in the cave of the heart."..³⁸

Thomas stresses the first level. In his emphasis on common humanity, he sees "salvation as essentially *humanisation*," and says

The Mission of salvation and the task of humanisation are integrally related to each other, even if they cannot be considered identical.³⁹

At the level of humanisation, the secular dialogue and mutuality in participation are key means of mission. Thomas and the CISRS group of thinkers helped the church in India and elsewhere to pay more attention to concrete situational demands in cooperation with other faiths and ideologies in the common human struggle for justice around the world. This Chandran identifies as the main key in the development of Indian Christian theology. It is not the "form" in which to make doctrinal formulations about God, Christ, Spirit, church, sacraments, salvation, hope and such that matters, but the continuing of the "resurrection event" into life situations, "taking a stand for righteousness, peace and justice in human affairs" in spite of polarisations and divisions.⁴⁰ Action groups and secular movements of social change being signposts of new humanity, indigenous theology must shape itself to provide the rational base and motivation for Christian mission to participate along with them to achieve the common good for common humanity. True theology cannot remain simply in abstract formulations. It is not just a process of formulation of doctrines, but a process of doing, "a process of participating in the real presence of Christ with two poles, one the sacramental participation and the other a contemporary reenactment of the exodus-covenant experience for people suffering from oppression."⁴¹

Indian Christian theological conferences have helped bring together church leaders, Christian thinkers, theologians and theological educators to meet to formulate a relevant theology for the Indian church. The first conference at Poona in 1942 considered the "theological task,"⁴² and it already distinguished between "dogma – the central absolute core;" and "doctrine – the relative, interpretative and application expression." The need in the Indian situation was identified as the applicational

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 152f.

39. MM Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, Madras: CLS, 1971, p. 8.

40. *ICT Survey*, pp. 153-155.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

42. See the report by Marcus Ward, *Our Theological Task*, Madras: CLS, 1946.

interpretation rather than dogma. This conference made the church and theological teachers aware of the need for paying more attention to the cultural background of India. The Indian Christian Theological Association encouraged indigenous thinking and published what was written in its quarterly *Indian Journal of Theology*. Similarly, the Church History Association of India began to publish its *Indian Church History Review*. The cause of indigenous theologising in India was enhanced by these efforts and the formation of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) with its quarterly *Religion and Society*.⁴³

Though "signs of a new break-through for the development of an Indian theology are not lacking," Indian Christian theologians are not in the habit of writing systematic theology and "there has been little attempt to write complete *summae* of theology."⁴⁴ The attempt of the early pioneers among Indian Christian theologians was "not to produce a *summa theologica*" but to "begin new lines of thought," to suggest possibilities of interpreting the gospel in the Indian setting. Each pursued their own interest in theologising. Whereas they could be criticised as "drifting without chart or compass," Thangasamy commended them as going the right and appropriate way in theologising.⁴⁵ Similar voices include Herbert Jai Singh, who warned that "Systematization is often irrelevant in the indigenous context," and that "In a situation of rapid flux theological systems are like dinosaurs which perish for lack of adaptability and resilience." He argued, "What is needed is not so much 'systems' but 'simple theological fragments' which answer questions that are being asked," facing up to the issues that confront us today.⁴⁶ MM Thomas gave considerable priority to the fragmentary reflections of lay Christians over the scientific systematizations of theologians, and thus CISRS was

43. We shall take note of the way these three structures and their journals came into existence, and the way they contributed to the development of theology and theological education in India, in later chapters.

44. *ICT*, p. 255. Cf. JR Chandran, "The Theological Task of the Church in India" in Horst Burkler & Wolfgang MW Roth, *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debate*, Lucknow: LPH, Delhi: ISPCK, Madras: CLS, 1972, p. 121 (henceforth *Indian Voices*).

45. "But, in the wisdom of God, it may be found to be better for Indian Christian Theologians to keep voyaging on without end than to arrive at a *summa*" wrote Thangasamy, "Theological Pioneering in India," *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 87. Cf. *Pioneers and ICT*.

46. H. Jai Singh, "Toward a Relevant Gospel in India" in *Indian Voices*, p. 125.

CHAPTER THREE

The Significance of Paul David Devanandan

At the closure of Western colonialism and the birth of independence there was a widespread drawing of distinctions between Western and indigenous Indian thought. It was seen both in the wider socio-political and the ecclesiastical realms. Devanandan lived through the preparation period and then went through the change to independence, both national and ecclesiastical. He was secretary to KT Paul and accompanied him to the United States where his seven year education between 1925-32 influenced him with liberal Protestant ideas and a pragmatic outlook on life. "Very much a product of the young American society,"¹ he started as a teacher at UTC, Bangalore, in 1932. He emphasized the "ideals of Jesus" as belonging to the core of Christianity, and stressed Christian faith in terms of moral and philosophical values.² Soon the theologically and politically outspoken Devanandan went through a change³ in his thinking, growing more and more dissatisfied with the theological liberalism which was then in vogue.

As a student of theological liberalism which reduced his Christianity to a kind of religious philosophy, he revolted against it and found in Kraemer a basis for the renewal of his theology.⁴

Devanandan felt drawn to Kraemer who represented the cutting edge between what was developing as the distinction between Western and indigenous Christian thought. The neo-orthodoxy of Barth, Kraemer and Brunner influenced Devanandan. Yet he noted that "Barth and

1. See Stephen Andrew Morton, "PD Devanandan, MM Thomas and the Task of Indigenous Theology", Ph. D. Thesis, Nottingham University, 1981, pp 25f.

2. Morton, p. 26. Morton refers to Devanandan's writings between 1931-35 and to MM Thomas' comment in Herbert Jai Singh's *Inter Religious Dialogue*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1967, p. 5.

3. Morton, p. 27. DT Niles alludes to this change as due to his first wife's death by suicide in 1937.

4. MM Thomas, "In Memory of Devanandan", Bangalore: CISRS, 1962; "Editorial: Life Together," *RS*, March 1964, p. 6.

Kraemer...stressed the fact that revelation is *from God* at the expense of the fact that it is *to and for the world of men*.⁵ Barth denied the possibility of natural theology and Kraemer denied revelation in other religions.⁶ Devanandan criticised these views and disagreed with Kraemer's negative approach to the non-Christian world and his conclusion that non-Christian religions were basically human enterprises devoid of God's revelation. When Kraemerian influence was at its peak at the Tambaram IMC conference of 1938, men like AG Hogg disagreed and questioned such views. The Rethinking Group in Madras had already expressed its views on Kraemer's book *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*⁷ in "A Review of Dr. Kraemer's Book," appended to their collection of essays *Rethinking Christianity in India*.⁸ Devanandan aligned himself with the views of AG Hogg.

By way of rejection, Devanandan went into a post-Kraemerian theology. Whereas the neo-orthodox impulse rejected "culture religion" and "any programme of merely earthly betterment," insisting on the "radical otherness of the Gospel,"⁹ Devanandan argued for a Christian concern in society and desired the creation of a theology which reaffirms a positive approach to other religions and culture contexts. He called upon his fellow Indian Christians, saying that

We as Christians ought to act as pioneers in radically removing the more important social evils in India by personal example.¹⁰

One of the primary tasks of Christian evangelism in India as elsewhere in our modern world is to make clear to the mind of thinking people that religion is relevant to life; that Christianity concerns this life as much as the life everlasting; that ours is a revolutionary faith which asks to realise here on earth abiding standards of righteousness and justice because these are the very nature of the Church.¹¹

5. Robin HS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969, p. 187.

6. Morton, pp. 45f.

7. Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.

8. Devasahayam, Sudarisanam, GV Job, et al, *Rethinking Christianity in India*, Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938.

9. Morton, p. 34. See Lesslie Newbigin, *Thy Kingdom Come*, Leeds: John Paul Preacher's Press, 1980, p. 3. Newbigin refers to continental theologians under the leadership of Barth as they met at Cairo and raised their protest in dissent before the Jerusalem 1928 conference of the IMC.

10. Devanandan, "The Rangoon Quadrennial Conference of the SCM of India, Burma and Ceylon," *Young Men of India*, 1938, p. 36. See Morton, p. 30.

11. Devanandan, "The Challenge of Hinduism", NCCR, 1952, p. 183.

Devanandan believed that Christian concern in society was not merely political or economic but primarily theological, rooted in and governed by the insight that "our faith stands for the redemption of the whole man" here and now.¹²

In this theological concern for the present and the problems of the present, Devanandan's views were shaped by the influence of E. Stanley Jones. In the thirties, "church" became the object of almost every significant sentence on mission,¹³ and talk about "church unity" for the sake of mission grew dominant. Debate arose on the question whether the church or the kingdom of God should be the starting point of missionary concern. Stanley Jones held that the kingdom of God is the motive and starting point,¹⁴ disapproving of the prominence given to the church, with the fear that it created a pseudo-absolute type similar to fascism and communism. To Jones, church was not the only locus of God's activity; and the kingdom was universal in extent. Jones implied an inclusive view of the kingdom:

a comprehensive, all inclusive conception which will gather up the total meaning of life into one living whole and give meaning and validity to the whole.¹⁵

Such universalism presented a smooth, rounded doctrine of God's kingship over the world. Jones called the church for involvement in a social mission, based on the view that already the secular preoccupation with social justice is evidence of the kingdom of God here and now.¹⁶ Devanandan, and later MM Thomas, took this social mission seriously to develop the ideal of the church's mission as social action for justice.

The Indian Theological Conference of 1942 at Poona¹⁷ also had an impact on Devanandan's thinking. There he was "freed" to seek evidence of God's revelation in Hinduisim, ignoring confessional boundaries. Distinction was made at the Poona conference between the ultimate and the penultimate, dogma and doctrine, the central core and the relative

12. Devanandan, "Report from the Christian Institute for the Study of Society," *NCCR*, 1951, p. 323.

13. See Newbigin, *Thy Kingdom Come*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

14. See E Stanley Jones, "The Kingdom of God and the Church," *NCCR*, 1939, p. 305; "On the Tambaram Conference," *The Guardian*, 23-2-1939, p. 102.

15. Morton, pp. 38f.

16. ES Jones, "On the Tambaram Conference," *The Guardian*, 23-3-1939, p 164.

17. See the Conference Findings in Marcus Ward, *Our Theological Task*, Madras: CLS, 1946.

expression of the gospel.¹⁸ Hogg's criticism of Kraemer led to the differentiation of dogma and doctrine. This, in the opinion of Marcus Ward, set Indian Christian theology free to look at Hinduism not as a totally alien, indivisible system but as a source of knowledge open to Indian Christians.¹⁹ Devanandan took the lead with this new-found freedom, going beyond Western understandings. D.A. Thangasamy indicates that the visit of Emil Brunner was "catalytic in Chenchiah's own view for the birth of Indian theology."²⁰ We note that Indian thinkers found inspiration and information from "catalytic" Western Christian theologians and philosophers, but were not settling to either imitate or parrot them. To further those influences, to adapt them to the Hindu Indian environment was the attempt of Indian Christian theologians.²¹ They were ready to disagree with Western theologies at places where their own environment (cultural context) informed them otherwise.²² This tendency was already expressed in the thirties by the lay Christian theological thinkers of the Rethinking Group:

The Church in India was bent on escaping from the leading-strings of the Christian missionary agencies in theological matters....The time when Western Christians could dictate to India the terms on which the encounter of the faiths was to be understood is now past and gone...."We accept nothing as obligatory save Christ...."²³

Devanandan was to lay a new foundation for Indian Christian theology particularly for inter-religious understanding and dialogue, very much influenced by the Poona conference. He on the one hand accepted the Kraemerian antidote to liberalism in theocentricity,²⁴ but on the other he interpreted this theocentricity as God's sovereignty over the world; that God is Lord of all and that this demands the task of making the gospel relevant to all. His all-embracing concept of God included a theological interpretation of the social order, a world-oriented interpretation of God and God's mission.

18. Morton, pp. 46 and 73.

19. Morton, p. 46.

20. See DA Thangasamy, *The Theology of Chenchiah, with Selections from His Writings*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1960.

21. Bengt Hoffman, *Christian Social Thought in India, 1947-1962*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1967, p. 47.

22. Morton, p. 46.

23. See Eric J Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, London: SCM, 1977, pp. 120f. He quotes Sudarisanam, Devasahayam, GV Job et al., *Rethinking Christianity in India*, Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938, pp. 6, 8f.

24. Morton, p. 51.

Devanandan observes from the history of the church and her mission in India:

For some time past, we have considered our evangelistic task in terms of confronting other non-Christian religious systems with the counter-claims of Christianity as another system of religion. We have been preaching a way of life, a system of thought, instead of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which still is: God's reign is already here.²⁵

God's reign here and now was to mean that the Christian lived and shared "community" with his neighbour; and since Hindus were considerably the majority, Devanandan took it seriously upon him to interpret Christian mission from a Hindu cultural context.

Devanandan's emphases on social action and dialogue point to a strategic aspect of the mission of the church in India. A major contribution of Devanandan to Indian Christian theology is to interpret mission as *lokasangraha*.²⁶ The Sanskrit term *lokasangraha* or *lokasamgraha* occurs twice in the *Bhagavad Gita*²⁷ and means "the maintenance of the world," "to maintain the world order," "the holding together" by wise men or saints of the liturgical or sacred action, "dharma," "caste duty," "keeping of people to their duties," "the order of the world" and the idea of the "welfare of the world."²⁸ It is with the goal of *niskama karma* or disinterested action that a religious person gets involved in "service of God and the welfare of the world."²⁹ This world-oriented emphasis of Devanandan was also due to the influence of neo-Hinduism on his thinking.³⁰ Of special significance were the influences of Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo. Radhakrishnan opined that *lokasangraha*, or working for the welfare of others, demands

25. "Ministry of Reconciliation," Devanandan Archives, UTC Library, Bangalore.

26. See Morton's discussion on this in his thesis, pp. 56-98.

27. Gita 3:20, 25 refer to *lokasangraha*. R. Panikkar in his *The Vedic Experience: Mantramajara*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977, pp. 428f, translates as follows: "It was only by working that Janaka and others attained perfection. In the same way you in your turn should work for the maintenance of the world"; "The ignorant act from attachment to work; the wise however, should act, but in a spirit of detachment, with desire to maintain the world order". Cf. Morton, pp. 56f.

28. Quoted from Panikkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 881, 427; KT Telang and LD Barrett in WDP Hill, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, Oxford: OUP, 1928; EJ Thomas, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, London: John Murray, 1959; RC Zaehner, *Hindu Scriptures*, London: JM Dent and Sons, 1972; see Morton, p. 57.

29. WDP Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 62; Morton, p. 58.

30. Morton, p. 55.

a change in the whole pattern of life, wherein one is continuously active. He wrote that

Lokasangraha stands for the unity of the world, the interrelatedness of society. If the world is not to sink into a condition of physical misery and moral degradation, if the common life is to be decent and dignified, religious ethics must control social action. The aim of religion is to spiritualise society and establish a brotherhood on earth. We must be inspired by the hope of embodying ideals in earthly institutions.³¹

Aurobindo Ghose understood man through his relations with his environment and through world harmony.³² Devanandan linked up with this trend in neo-Hinduism. Since secularization brought on a dissolution of traditional Indian society, there developed a contextual concern in post-Independence India for finding "new foundations for her political and social structures" and "an adequate social philosophy."³³ This search was a common search of all Indians and Devanandan opined that Christian participation in this search should be the way forward for relevant Christian mission in India.

Such participation in a common concern sets prerequisites. On the theoretical level it demands a concern for the individual and a dynamic understanding of history – a new anthropology and a historical consciousness; and on the practical level an active inter-religious interaction (dialogue) and co-operation in social action.³⁴ Devanandan began to study the implications of these prerequisites, as his written works reveal. Whereas he concentrated on the content of inter-religious interaction, his associate and successor MM Thomas took up the implications of Christian co-operation for social action. Thus together they spearheaded the development of an ecumenical theology of mission in India, centred around a CISRS group of thinkers and influencing the church in India through the National Council and Serampore structures.

To Devanandan mission as *lokasangraha* meant the producing of a community of "man with man" and "men with God," "a triangular

31. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 and 139.

32. Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *The Life Divine*, II, p. 684.

33. PD Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.) *Christian Participation in National Building*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1960, p. viii.

34. See PD Devanandan, *Resurgent Hinduism: Review of Modern Movements*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1958, p. 5. Cf. Morton, p. 55.

community," the "true community" "in which alone a person finds himself as a person among persons in relation to the person."³⁵ His theocentric perspective³⁶ accommodated all religions as within the common search for community around one God, while yet he retained his Christian claim to the uniqueness of Christ as the person who alone mattered.³⁷ He spoke of "God's redemptive activity outside the Church" with a theocentricity transcending confessionalism.³⁸ He wrote:

It may not be fair to say that God in His graciousness will not reward the faith of the non-Christian seeker...³⁹

Yet as a Christian apologist he goes on:

We press forward with the mission of testimony which has been delivered to us declaring to the end of time that there is no other name given under heaven by which men shall be saved except the name Jesus Christ.⁴⁰

He interpreted the Christian task as "to bring these men of faith to confront the living Christ," affecting "a face to face meeting of the credal claims of Christ in the Gospel."⁴¹ Devanandan envisaged three different stages in the "apologetic" task of the Christian in dialogue. First, a detailed study of the different varieties of modern Hinduism; second, a clarification of terminology; and third, the daring task of evolving an Indian theological expression of the Christian faith.⁴² In *Preparation for Dialogue* his view is expressed that

Effective communication of the Gospel to the non-Christian men of faith depends on the effective use made of the religious vocabulary with which he is familiar, and of the cultural pattern of life in which he finds self-expression and community being.⁴³

On the one hand, along with Hogg, Devanandan wished to discover a "seeking and finding" of God in other religions, and on the other he was

35. See Nalini Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.), *Preparation for Dialogue*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1964, p. 149. Cf. Morton, p. 64.

36. Morton, p. 72.

37. PD Devanandan, "Christian and Non-Christian Faiths," *IJT*, 1957, p. 78.

38. Morton, p. 72.

39. PD Devanandan, "Christian and Non-Christian Faiths", *op. cit.*, p. 78.

40. *Ibid.*

41. PD Devanandan, *Resurgent Hinduism*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

42. Robin HS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969, p. 203.

43. N Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.) *Preparation for Dialogue*, *op. cit.*, p 191.

concerned to assert the uniqueness of the Christian faith.⁴⁴ Richard Keithahn remarked hence, that though an original thinker, Devanandan was "not wholly free of a certain missionary conservatism in his approach to Hinduism."⁴⁵ One could see, as Morton does, that "Devanandan's theology of religions was not a systematic treatment of the extra-ecclesiastical presence of the new creation," and that he "did not develop his theological basis for it to any great extent."⁴⁶ Perhaps he would have done so, if he had lived longer.

Devanandan's emphasis on *lokasangraha* as God's purpose directed towards both the church and the world is also not fully developed. "The relation between the church, as bearer of divine mission (*koinonia*), *lokasangraha*), and the world, as the sphere of God's activity, still remains a question unsatisfactorily answered...."⁴⁷ His theological attention moved away from the world as he concentrated on the church, unlike Stanley Jones, giving it a special status. Such attachment of special status raises a wall of division between the church and the world. Yet his biblical basis drawn from 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 prescribed a "ministry of reconciliation, involving the church as new creation into the world – the creation awaiting to be renewed. The concern of God's mission lies with the world being recreated. The focus of God's action is on the world's renewal."⁴⁸

In the "triangular true community" the question naturally faced is that of ecclesiastical boundaries. EJ Sharpe finds in Devanandan a rather liberal attitude akin to an "anonymous Christianity"⁴⁹ point of

44. PD Devanandan, "Recent New Testament Scholarship and the Indian Church," *NCCR*, 1951, p. 486.

45. Morton reports this from his personal interview with Keithahn, p. 78.

46. Morton, p. 78.

47. Morton, p. 85.

48. Cf. Morton, pp. 86f and PD Devanandan, "The New Creation" and "The Household of God," 1958, UTC Archives, Bangalore; *Preparation for Dialogue*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

49. For a concise description of "Anonymous Christianity," see EJ Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 9, pp. 118-131. Sharpe succinctly traces the development of this concept from the "sadly repetitive" and "romantically impressionistic" work of Raymond Panikkar: *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, 1964; Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions" in *Theological Investigations*, Volume V, English translation, Helicon Press and Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966; Anita Roper, *The Anonymous Christian*, English Translation, Sheed and Ward, 1966; Eugene Hillman, *The Wider Ecumenism*, 1968; and criticisms on this concept in H Van Straelen, *The Catholic Encounter with World Religions*, 1966 and Klaus Klostermaier, *Hindu and Christian in Vrindavan*, 1969.

view.⁵⁰ But Devanandan tried "to be very cautious not to go too far with his extra-ecclesiastical speculations."⁵¹ His willingness to see the movement of the Holy Spirit in other religions was "strongly qualified by a far more developed Church-centredness which views it an important part of mission to draw people into the Church...affirming the continued relevance of baptism."⁵² Devanandan interpreted "conversion" as the sign of God's new creation, "the true origin of community,"⁵³ and saw it functioning as a two-way process, "extension of God's activity on two fronts...inward into the Church and outward into the world."⁵⁴ Whereas the inward journey of non-Christian Indians into the church was the preoccupation of conservative and evangelical missions,⁵⁵ under Devanandan's influence there developed an increasing emphasis on the outward journey into the world of the Christians. Such emphasis directed the CISRS group of thinkers "into the analysis of social trends to discern their theological importance."⁵⁶

The sociological understanding thus attempted necessitated political, economic, religious and ethical analyses and naturally paved the way for interpreting the services that the church was to render to society. *Diakonia* became the prophetic role played by the church in her *lokasangraha* mission.⁵⁷ All the services of the churches fit in as "the ministry of reconciliation" rendered by the church in mission to the "whole network of human relationships which we call society."⁵⁸ Such service or ministry is offered primarily in terms of meeting actual human needs

50. EJ Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, op. cit., p. 140.

51. Morton, p. 75.

52. *Preparation for Dialogue*, op. cit., p. 118.

53. Morton, p. 90. See Devanandan, "The New Creation," Devanandan Archives, UTC Library, Bangalore. He wrote: "New creation becomes a shattering reality when a man confronts God in Christ, and is apprehended by God."

54. PD Devanandan, *Christian Concern in Hinduism*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1961, p. 124.

55. Whereas Devanandan did not deny the conversion of a Hindu to Christ, he disagreed with the emphasis on "a shift in physical community" "often characterised by the appropriation of different social customs, manner of dress, and dwelling in the mission compound." Morton, p. 91.

56. Morton cites MM Thomas as expressing this view, p. 88.

57. Morton, p. 92; citing PD Devanandan, "The Household of God," Devanandan Archives.

58. PD Devanandan, "The Ministry of Reconciliation," Devandan Archives.

wherever necessary,⁵⁹ but it should also fulfil God's ultimate purpose for man.⁶⁰ Hence in the theology developed by PD Devanandan and his CISRS group of thinkers, a triad of components hold together as the tasks of mission: service (*diakonia*), preaching (*kerygma*) and fellowship (*koinonia*).⁶¹ Christian ministry then should incorporate all three, and theological education should adapt its curriculum to train the people of God for all three components. Thus "ministry" is interpreted not only as the role played by the ordained clergy, but varieties of service done in the name of Christ and on behalf of the church.

In his study of the contributions of CISRS to the development of Christian social thought in India, Godwin Shiri indicates that whereas MM Thomas took the aspect of social action and gave leadership as Devanandan's successor, the area of inter-religious dialogue and the exploration of the "seeking and finding" of God in other religions remained undeveloped after the premature death of Devanandan.⁶² Stanley Samartha contributed leadership to whatever did develop in later decades. But the area remains little explored in a land of religiosity and religious plurality.⁶³

59. Cf. PD Devanandan, *Our Task Today: Revision of Evangelistic Concepts* (Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1958, p. 16; and *Christian Issues in Southern Asia* (New York: Friendship Press, 1963, p. 118).

60. Morton, p. 96. 61. Morton, p. 95.

62. See Godwin Shiri, *Christian Social Thought in India: 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982, p. 193.

63. The lack of development of Christian understanding of other religions and the failure to train teachers of religions is to be noted in its acute severity in the fact that UTC until now has depended on expatriate teachers to staff its department of religions. Henry S Wilson, Director of Research Studies of the Senate of Serampore College, reports that UTC is "not enrolling students in post-graduate M.Th. studies in Religions for the academic year 1989-90 since there is no staff to teach Religions" (from a phone conversation with the author in June 1989).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Significance of M. M. Thomas

Madathilparambil Mammen Thomas became the most noted, articulate and leading Indian Christian theologian of the second half of the twentieth century. Through his leadership roles in the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS), the East Asia Christian Council and the World Council of Churches, he exercised significant influence upon the development of indigenous Indian Christian theology, ecumenical social thought and the theology of mission. He is identified with Devanandan as a "pioneer in Indian Christian Theology,"¹ the "foremost" theological thinker of CISRS,² and "a great bridge-builder" between theologians and laymen of the First World and the Third World, who "points to the very centre of our faith and the decisive role of theological reflection."³ Already over two dozen post-graduate and doctoral research studies have attempted to interpret Thomas' theology and relevance,⁴ which in itself indicates the importance of Thomas for our study. Thomas was neither a professional theologian by formal academic training nor a systematic theologian by practice, but entered into theological commenting purely out of circumstantial pressures. He never hesitated to qualify his addresses with an indication of how

1. See AF Thompson and RW Taylor in *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debate*, Lucknow, Delhi, Madras: LPH, ISPCK, CLS, 1972, pp. 149 and 165.

2. Godwin Shiri, *Indian Christian Social Thought, 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982, p. 192.

3. Professor Hendrik Berkhof of the University of Leiden spoke thus of Thomas at the ceremony conferring an honorary doctorate on MM Thomas in May 1975. Quoted from *The Guardian*, 5 June 1975, p. 176.

4. See, for example, Stephen Andrew Morton, "PD Devanandan, MM Thomas and the Task of Indigenous Theology", Ph. D. thesis, University of Nottingham, 1981, chapter II on Thomas, pp. 99-173; Sunand Sumithra, 'Revolution as Revelation: A Study of M. M. Thomas' Theology', Ph. D. thesis, University of Tübingen, West Germany, 1982 (later published as *Revolution as Revelation: A study of M. M. Thomas' Theology*, co-sponsored by International Christian Network, Tübingen and TRACI in Delhi, 1984).

unqualified he was to attempt what he was doing.⁵ While addressing the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary⁶ on "A New Look at the Reformation of Abraham Malpan," he confessed,

I have reason to be diffident on this occasion....There are many Church History lecturers here, and I am dealing with the meaning of a movement in Kerala Church History, but without any training in the academic disciplines of Church History. But this is not the first time that I do such a thing. I have entered the study of religions, society and theology in the same manner and have got away with it.⁷

Early Influences on Thomas' Theology

His passionate commitment to society led him to take up questions of politics, economics, religions and social justice, and to develop his own theological interpretations. Such passion was aroused in him by his church and religious background. The Mar Thoma Church resulted from ecclesiastical reforms which, as Thomas himself identifies, were in conjunction with the cultural and religious ferment in early nineteenth century Kerala.⁸ The ensuing democratisation of the church emphasised the importance of individual decisions in matters relating to salvation rather than the "heightened herding" by priests.⁹

As a graduate in chemistry in 1935, Thomas started as a teacher at Perumpavoor Ashram School and was introduced to the problems of

5. In response to the author's question on how he developed his writing skills and expertise on so many different areas of academic and theological disciplines Thomas said that there is so much that the church and theologians must address in society; he is no expert, but speaks and writes because there is need; he is not always right and he does not know all; but people are willing to hear and to think for themselves. So he kept at it. The author found in him a jovial spirit as he light-heartedly made this comment. This is an unusual gift for an Indian Christian leader, to be so human, laughing at himself and not trying to impose a serious attitude about his importance or his authenticity in his views. It reveals Thomas' ability to transcend his Indianness as an ecumenical person.

6. What started as the ancient church of St. Thomas founded a formal theological seminary only as late as 1813 in Kerala. The reform under Abraham Malpan in 1837 gave birth to the Mar Thoma Church, which made a fresh start in theological education in 1926 by establishing its Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, at Zion Hill, Kottayam. The Abraham Malpan lecture series at this seminary started with the Golden Jubilee in 1976.

7. See MM Thomas, *Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel*, Abraham Malpan Lectures, Madras: CLS, 1977, pp. 1-2.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-13.

9. See Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

inter-religious fellowship by MA Thomas. The question of "retaining the centrality of Christ while grappling with the realities of other religious and social concerns" started to haunt Thomas' mind even from 1937 when he participated in the All Kerala Inter-Religious Conference at Alwaye.¹⁰ The time spent in serving at the "waifs and strays home" of the Christian Institute, Alleppey,¹¹ readily led him to set up a Bal Bhavan at Trivandrum in 1938; and the Shertallay famine of 1941 led him into a beggar relief programme. The frequent theme and focus of MM Thomas' theology started already then; it was the struggle to relate his obvious "evangelicalism and Christ-centredness" to "the social context."¹² This was strengthened and nurtured through his participation and leadership as the first and full-time secretary of the Kerala Youth Christian Council of Action,¹³ inaugurated at Varkala. YCCA laid emphasis on

the fundamentals of Christian Faith and on the necessity of translating that faith into social action and for meeting the challenges and opportunities of the situation.¹⁴

The council's objective was a reflection of Thomas' own view of holding the religious and the social together:

The Gospel of Christ offers redemption to the whole of human life. We fail because we try to draw a line between personal and social, and attempt to spiritualise the individual apart from his social relationships. All life is one. The social runs into the personal and this social environment, to a large extent, shapes the inner life of man...We want the social and political life of mankind to be a reflection of the kingdom of God.¹⁵

MM Thomas' social thinking grew to include political concerns as a result of a period of study in 1941-42 when he researched into Christianity and Communism.¹⁶ From Reinhold Niebuhr's analysis of power and of

10. M. A. Thomas and M. M. Thomas had "an on-going discussion" on the meaning of Christ in the context of the spiritual experience of other faiths. Cf. MM Thomas, "Faith Seeking Understanding and Responsibility", 1973, p. 1, MM Thomas Archives at UTC.

11. Later Christavasram, Manganam.

12. See Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

13. For a historical understanding of this movement, see George M. John, *Youth Christian Council of Action: 1938-1954*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1972.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 1f.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

16. AK Thampy and MM Thomas went on study leave from YCCA and read MacMurray, Reinhold Niebuhr, Demant, Berdyaev and Solovyev. See Thomas' "Notes: 1941," UTC Archives.

private and public morality, came Thomas' convictions that "Conflict will be inevitable in gaining social justice" and "no dualism can exist between religious and political ethics." Later these ideas influenced his theological interpretations.¹⁷ Gandhian *ahimsa* was his earlier creed, but now he found Marxist ideology as a better political basis for social action. He proposed to rewrite the YCCA constitution to say

This council believes that the only effective way in which desirable changes can be brought about in the structure of society and undesirable changes prevented is by political action.¹⁸

This found disfavour with Acharya KK Chandy, who defended Gandhian ideals and rejected Marxist ideals as incompatible with the gospel. Thomas' booklet *Gospel to the Poor*¹⁹ "intended to help Christian groups to understand the social message of the Bible...to arouse the Christian Church to its duty of removing poverty"²⁰ also found disfavour with the government of Kerala. Chandy attacked Thomas as being unchristian, contradictory and situational²¹ with a theology which "accepts the present situation and politics and resigns itself to it."²² This ideological split between Thomas and Chandy led Thomas to form the short-lived National Christian Youth Council²³ through which he sought to work out the nature of the dialectic involved in Christian service, "relating his evangelical Christ-centred faith to social issues and ideologies."²⁴ Thomas kept dialogue with the Marxists and felt strongly that "Christian service cannot be performed from an attitude of detachment as an optional extra to evangelism, but from within the 'ferment' for social justice as a catalyst." His sincerity expresses itself in this letter to his wife:

I must come up or go down with a Christian group, though, standing on the Orthodox Christian faith and working for scientific socialism.

17. Thomas' own claim, as he said in an interview on 27-2-1980 to Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 103. Thomas was influenced by Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1942, pp. xiiff; JH Oldham (ed.), *Christian Faith and the Common Life*, Chicago: Willet, Clark and Co., 1937, p. 90.

18. MM Thomas in the YCCA circular letter of 26 May 1943.

19. Co-authored with KV Mathew, a pamphlet, 1943.

20. MM Thomas' correspondence with KK Chandy, 26 March 1943.

21. KK Chandy wrote "Violence, Non-violence and Change in the Constitution," a short paper attacking MM Thomas.

22. KK Chandy in an interview, 29-2-80.

23. George John, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

24. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

– combining evangelism and socialism in a unity of life, which has within it a tension between worldliness and unworldliness.²⁶

Thomas agreed with Leonard Schiff that Marxism and Barthian insights should be brought together²⁷ to make Christian witness effective. His admiration for Marxian methodology did not mean a total rejection of Gandhian views. He brought Marxism and Gandhian *satyagraha* (truth force) together and suggested that the church should “create strife in order to make social justice possible” within the framework of faith in the kingdom of God.²⁸ But later in 1948 when he learnt of the suppression of freedom in Czechoslovakia and learnt of the totalitarian attitudes of the Communist Party of India, his confidence in Marxist ideology was shattered²⁹ and he turned to liberal democracy in support of Jawaharlal Nehru’s policies.³⁰

Thomas’ theological keenness widened when he was placed in the ecumenical orbit by Malcolm Adhiseshiah³¹ of the Student Christian Movement of India. At his recommendation he was appointed the first Asia Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation in Geneva in 1947. His paper “Man, Machine and Society” introduced him to the ecumenical movement at the very inaugural assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 at Amsterdam. In it he evaluated the irresponsible use of power in both communism and capitalism.³² This began a long and formative acquaintance with world ecumenical thinking which influenced his views and writings; for example the WCC “Responsible Society” concept enabled Thomas to develop his own theology of society. He gained much experience from working with leaders like John Bennett, Reinhold Niebuhr, JH Oldham, Emil Brunner, Nils Ehrenstrom and N. Berdyaev on the preparatory committee on “The Church and the Disorder of Society” for the WCC First Assembly at

26. MM Thomas’ letter to his wife, Elizabeth Pennamma, 26 June 1943.

27. Cf. MM Thomas, “Significance of Marxian and Barthian Insights for a Theology of Religion,” *RS*, December 1974.

28. See MM Thomas, “The Church: What I Owe to It and My Complaints against It,” *Arunodayam*, December 1939; and “Faith Seeking Understanding and Responsibility,” 1973 *MSS*, UTC Archives, p. 9.

29. See John Maliekal, *Indian Political Parties*, Bangalore: CSA Publications, 1978, pp. 43f. Morton gathered this view also from Bastiaan Wielenga, earlier an associate staff of CISRS and later staff at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai.

30. MM Thomas, “My Ideological Quest,” *MSS*, 1979, UTC Archives.

31. Dr Malcolm Adhiseshiah of Madras Christian College was a leader of SCM India; later he was Vice-Chancellor of Madras University.

32. Cf. “My Ideological Quest,” *MSS* 1979, UTC Archives.

Amsterdam. Hence he was appointed part-time executive secretary to the Bombay follow-up study. He associated with Paul Abrecht in the study on the Churches and the Problem of Rapid Social Change, organised by the 1954 WCC Second Assembly at Evanston, and was already involved in East Asia Conferences and WCC committees. His appointment to the CISRS as associate director in 1957 and as director in 1963, to the Church and Society working committee as moderator (1961–68), to the East Asia Christian Conference as honorary staff and editor of *Church and Society*, to the WCC as Chairman of the Central Committee (1968–75) are but a few of the roles which led him to both shape his own theology and the ecumenical theology of mission through the many papers he wrote, as well as shape the ecumenical movement itself and Indian indigenous Christianity. In his analysis of the WCC Fifth Assembly, even Peter Beyerhaus affirmed that

The utterances of Thomas were particularly crucial for a deeper understanding of the essence not just of the whole question of the Fifth Assembly, but of the contemporary Geneva Ecumenism itself and this for the following two reasons: 1. While other speeches at the Assembly dealt with just *one* aspect of the Assembly Theme, Thomas spoke of the *newer development* in the World Council....2. Thomas can be considered as the most outstanding representative of the Geneva line since Uppsala 1968...³³

It will be redundant for this thesis to consider in detail Thomas' theology of mission, as it has been amply discussed in several works and particularly in the recent work of Sunand Sumithra.³⁴ Hence we shall confine to a few salient features of Thomas' theological insight.

Theology as Thomas Saw It

To Thomas theology becomes meaningful only in the context of grappling with the problems of living.³⁵ He found it easy to start from the world since that was how he came to appreciate theology,³⁶ and he attempted to take theology far beyond its structures of dogma and doctrine to its social context.³⁷ For this not only "some form of hermeneutics" was

33. Quoted in Richard W Taylor, *Society and Religion – Essays in Honour of MM Thomas*, p. 4.

34. Sunand Sumithra's doctoral thesis, *op. cit.*

35. MM Thomas, "Comments on Current Events," *NCCR*, January 1966, p 34.

36. MM Thomas, "the Logic of Christian Mission," *The Pilgrim*, SCM of Ceylon, 1959, p. 69.

37. This was the attempt of Thomas in his *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM, 1969, pp. 287f.

"essential,"³⁸ but "inherent" in its epistemological foundations.³⁹ He opted for a two-sided hermeneutics and a two-sided commitment to the Word on the one hand and the world on the other, and understood theology as a

new look at the Biblical understanding of God's purpose for the world in Jesus Christ and of the realities of the contemporary man and his world and their mutual dialectical relations.⁴⁰

Theology to him was a walk on

the razor's edge between the Biblical *kerygma* and the process of its demythologisation with a view to demythologising its truth and meaning for men in different climates of thought and cultural milieux.⁴¹

Theology is "the 'cutting line' between the Word and the World,"⁴² the bridge between the biblical thought-world and the contemporary issue-world, as in the missionary theology of Barth and Kraemer.⁴³

Thomas' Understanding of Christology

In attempting to locate Christ as present in the Indian renaissance, Thomas is quick to accept DT Niles' "previousness of Jesus Christ in every situation"⁴⁴ and Chenchiah's "raw fact of Christ."⁴⁵ Though wary of the "depth" and "interiority" of Abhishiktananda⁴⁶ and Mark Sunder Rao⁴⁷

38. See Robin Gill, *The Social Context of Theology*, Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975, p. 64.

39. See Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-116, particularly p. 112.

40. MM Thomas, "Uppsala 1968 and the Contemporary Theological Situation," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1970, p. 42.

41. MM Thomas, "Universalism and the Unchanging Core of Christian Dogma," *RS*, March 1976, p. 57.

42. MM Thomas, *Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism*, Madras: CLS, 1978, p. 24.

43. See Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

44. See Thomas, *Acknowledged Christ*, p. 301; cf. DT Niles, *Upon the Earth: The Mission of God and the Missionary Enterprise of the Churches*, London: SCM, 1962, p. 86.

45. See Chenchiah's articles in *The Guardian*, 6-2-47, 27-2-47; *Rethinking Christianity in India*, Madras: 1939; cf. DA Thangasamy's *The Theology of Chenchiah*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1967, "Significance of Chenchiah and His Thought," *RS*, X:3, 1963 and "Chenchiah's Understanding of Christ", *RS*, XI:3, 1964; RHS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969, pp. 147-151.

46. Cf. Swami Abhishiktananda, *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point in the Cave of the Heart*, Delhi: ISPCK, Revised Edition, 1976.

47. Cf. Mark Sunder Rao, "Inter Faith Dialogue and Spirituality," *RS*, March 1965, pp. 32ff. He identifies three forms of dialogue, being *loukika*, *shastrika*

as approaches which sell out theology to experience,⁴⁸ he did not totally reject the mystical or *bhakti* tradition. He accepted Appasamy's exposition of the *antaryamin*.⁴⁹ Out of his evangelical upbringing Thomas held the Word as absolute, but not experience. Experience was important but never the primary theological key. His Word-centreness was not sufficiently recognised by conservative evangelical Indian Christians who were aroused into a phobia over the social consciousness he expressed in his writings. Thomas himself was aware of the danger of a possible one-sidedness in his theology that could result from his preoccupation with contextual issues as "the only framework for the emergence of a new living theology."⁵⁰ Hence he held that social context is always ancillary and never completely determinative for theology.⁵¹ In the Indian, as also in all of Asian, social revolution, Thomas noted a tendency, a "corrupting temptation to absolutise [revolution] itself as a scheme of salvation."⁵² Hence he made the plea for the church to exercise a "prophetic ministry" in judgement and to give guidance.

The particular kind of theology Thomas proposes here is an articulation of belief (creed) for the correction and guidance of Christian ethics and must therefore be committed to take its starting point in actual participation in the social order.⁵³

Thomas' concern in his theological method is summed up by Cecil Hargreaves as "the challenging relevance of Christianity."⁵⁴ He is sincerely Christocentric in his concern to see theology as "challengingly relevant" to its social context in India, doing the double task of affirming as well as criticising it, acknowledging as well as presenting Christ Jesus. This burden is reflected in his writings:

and *bhava* (i. e., common life, critical discussion and interiority).

48. MM Thomas, "Some Trends in Indian Christian Theology," *RS*, December 1977, p. 11.

49. "Indwelling Spirit." See Bishop AJ Appasamy, *Christianity as Bhakti Margam*, Madras: CLS, 1928.

50. MM Thomas, "Uppsala 1968 and the Contemporary Theological Situation," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1970, p. 43.

51. MM Thomas, *Acknowledged Christ*, pp. 301ff.

52. MM Thomas, *Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism*, Madras: CLS, 1978, p. 166.

53. See MM Thomas, "The Social Manifesto of the Church," *The Guardian*, 21-5-1942, p. 232; Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

54. See Cecil Hargreaves, *Asian Christian Thinking*, Delhi: ISPCK, rev. ed. 1979, p. 102. The phrase "challenging relevance" was originated and popularised in the communications of A. G. Hogg.

In an age when the people of India are awake to the revolutionary dimensions of a truly human society, the Gospel must be defined and presented as the good news of the new humanity in Jesus Christ, as a message challengingly relevant to the deep human and spiritual aspirations of modern India, and as the source, criterion, redemption and fulfilment of the aspiration of the people for a fuller and richer human life.⁵⁵

"Fed up with the one-sided attention to the religious ultimate"⁵⁶ of eschatology as "going to heaven," Thomas wanted to "deflect Christology away from an eschatology which leaves Christ redundant in the present."⁵⁷ Hence he attempted to discern Christ in the secular world and the events of history. World history is "a dynamic process" in which the world redeemed by Christ is moving towards its eschatological goal.⁵⁸ What Christ is doing in secular history remains to a great extent ambiguous, and to discern it one needs the "eye of faith."⁵⁹ Thomas does not attach value to man's faith response but "like Barth, he accentuates the primacy of God's grace for man."⁶⁰ JAT Robinson commented on Thomas' ability to accept Christ's indwelling as well as Christ's work in society in faith as "panentheistic" or a "two-eyed" vision of reality.⁶¹ In fact, Thomas seems to operate with a "three eyed vision"⁶² as he struggles along with other theologians

to re-express the givenness of Christ through loyalty to his situation as well as through acknowledgement of the western theological tradition...[asking] Is there not a path to understand and encounter Jesus Christ as the ground and salvation of reason and morality

55. Cf. PD Devanandan and MM Thomas (eds.), *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1960; MM Thomas, *Towards a Theology of Contemporary Ecumenism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 182ff; "Faith Seeking Understanding and Responsibility," *MSS* 1973, p. 912; "Church for the World," Thomas Archives, UTC Library.

56. See MM Thomas, "Culture and Religion," review of H. Kraemer's *World Cultures and World Religions: The Coming Dialogue*, in *IRM*, 1961, p. 208.

57. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

58. MM Thomas, *Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

59. MM Thomas, *Some Theological Dialogues*, Madras: CLS-CISRS, 1977, p. 69. Reference here is made to Thomas' dialogue with Dr. HH Wolf, the then Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, based on his article "Christ at Work in History," *ER*, January 1966.

60. Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 138f.

61. Robinson commented that such two-eyed vision of reality was "prominent in Indian thinking." See his *Truth is Two Eyed*, London: SCM, 1979, p. 38.

62. See CS Song, *Third Eye Theology*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1980.

within a secular framework without a return to traditional religiosity?

Thomas' concern to maintain the central truth claims of Christian faith "without reduction" can be seen also in his report to the WCC Central Committee at Addis Ababa where he claimed Christ as "the only theological centre of the Council."⁶⁴ Christ alone is absolutised in Thomas' theology. Though truth and salvation are seen as possible outside the church and religions, they are "never beyond his [Christ's] kingly rule," and no revelation could be imagined in exclusion of Christ.⁶⁵

Thomas' Ecclesiology

An increasing tendency in Thomas' theology was to allow his social consciousness to influence his theology of religions and his ecclesiology, which in turn influenced his understanding of missions. He believed Christ is not confined "in the *koinonia* of the Word and Sacraments" but is also in "the extension of that *koinonia* in social and secular life."⁶⁶ He saw this as a logical development of Barthian theology⁶⁷ and this affected his definition of the church. It was no more the "only" sphere of Christ's activity. He is discernible in other religions and ideologies. As Lord over society,⁶⁸ Christ is active in society, releasing men from the false absolutes they have created for themselves.⁶⁹ How we define the Christ event which is the core and criterion of truth in any Christianity, and how we interpret the faith community, the church, in relation to the religions and ideologies is the contextual task of indigenous theology.⁷⁰ If Christ is active outside the traditional church, then can one belong to him outside the church? If so, can the body of Christ be defined as "larger than the Church" and extra-ecclesiastical? And hence can the boundary lines be fragile or broken?

With his commitment to the universal nature of salvation in the sense that salvation is for all mankind as well as all creation including the material

63. MM Thomas, *Acknowledged Christ*, p. 30.

64. See *ER*, April 1971, pp. 99, 102f.

65. MM Thomas, "Understanding the Tides of History," *South East Asia Journal of Theology*, April 1964, p. 21.

66. MM Thomas, "European Theology in the Experience of an Indian Layman and Ecumenist," *RS*, 1978, p. 86.

67. *Koinonia* in this development would depend solely on divine initiative and not on man's missionary intervention. See Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

68. See PD Devanandan and MM Thomas (eds), *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1960, pp. 48, 113.

69. MM Thomas, "Man and the Universe of Faiths," Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1975, pp. 148f.

70. See "European Theology..." *op. cit.*, p. 86.

world,⁷¹ and to "the vision and power of a new human fellowship and new humanity in Christ,"⁷² Thomas tended to see the church as a "laboratory of community,"⁷³ rather than a privileged guarantor of salvation. Not only "the Christian community in the narrow sense" but "the whole human community as included in Christ" is seen as the "laboratory of community" called "the Church."⁷⁴ While agreeing with Devanandan's views on *koinonia* and *lokasangraha*, Thomas goes further to declare God's wider *koinonia* in the world, a "secular fellowship" outside the church as a sign of Christ's redemptive activity as well as that of a "Christ-centred fellowship" in other religions and ideologies.⁷⁵

Based on this "wider ecumenism" and "open secularism,"⁷⁶ a Christian can co-operate with his non-Christian neighbour of "faith or no faith" to experience "spiritual communion, social community and material communism."⁷⁷ Such views enhanced Thomas' concern for Christian participation in nation building through action groups for common humanity and social justice. The problem with Thomas' inclusive theology is that it remains undeveloped in clarifying what this inclusivity means. Nowhere does Thomas fully define "the theme of the 'Christ-centred fellowship of faith' within other religions and ideologies."⁷⁸

Thomas' Theology of "Salvation and Humanisation"

Thomas took Devanandan's ideas of community and common humanity⁷⁹ further and developed his theology of humanisation. Whereas much of traditional theology over-emphasises the divinity of Christ,

71. MM Thomas, "Church and Society in India," undated, p. 8, Thomas Archives, UTC Library.

72. MM Thomas, "Divine Forgiveness," London: CMS, 1974, p. 1.

73. MM Thomas, "Salvation and Development," *Crucible*, 1974, p. 137; cf. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

74. *Ibid.*

75. See MM Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, CLS, 1971, pp. 13, 40.

76. MM Thomas, *The Secular Ideologies in India and the Secular Meaning of Christ*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1976; Cf. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

77. MM Thomas, "An Ecumenical Approach to Development: Viewpoints and Perspectives," *NCCR*, 1980, p. 69.

78. See MM Thomas, "The Post Colonial Crisis in Mission – A Comment," *RS*, March 1971, p. 69.

79. Thomas quotes Devanandan as having commented on "A persistent emphasis on Jesus Christ as reinforcing and clarifying (rather than weakening or confusing) the common humanity of all men which is the basic context which makes dialogues among men about man, his faith, his culture or his society, real conversations in and about Christ himself." "Some Crucial Issues in Christian Social Ethics Today," 1967, *MSS*, p. 9, Thomas Archives, UTC Library.

Thomas takes the incarnation – humanisation – of Christ as more relevant for contemporary missions. Forces of dehumanisation were identified in the destructive nature revealed in the world wars, problems of nation building and social justice in the post-colonial, industrial society, the increasing complexity of life due to the problems of population explosion, poverty and politics. These aroused the ecumenical movement to relate the gospel to contemporary man's problems. From the forties to the sixties this trend was on the increase. Uppsala 1968 and Bangkok 1973 both spoke of Jesus Christ as the true man coming to transform mankind into full humanity, sharing common humanity and true manhood and new manhood.⁸⁰ Thomas, who was involved in these conferences, raised some questions on the "Crucial Issues of the Theology of Mission in Contemporary India" in his Carey Memorial Lectures at UTC, which were published as *Salvation and Humanisation*, a book which brought about much debate.⁸¹

The crucial question raised in the theology of mission in the world-wide discussion of it today is that of the relation between the gospel of salvation and the struggles of men everywhere for their humanity, constituting as this does the contemporary context of the world in which the gospel has to be communicated.⁸²

The concern of Thomas was to ask "salvation to what?" rather than "from what?" – the negative question that dominated much of Indian Christianity. This was the significance of Thomas' theology.⁸³ According to Paul, the purpose of salvation is to transform man into God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.⁸⁴ Hence Thomas could include action programmes as viable ways of manifesting Christ.

Thomas' Theology of Mission as *Karma Marga*

Robin Boyd identifies the action orientation in the mission method of Thomas as the *karma marga* of Indian Christian theology.⁸⁵ Unlike Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya and AJ Appasamy who took to *gnana marga* and *bhakti marga* in their approach to interpreting the Christian gospel to India, Thomas has taken the way of action, which we shall consider in detail when we discuss his leadership in the CISRS.

As noted earlier, he drew inspiration from his own church background

80. Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1971.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

83. Thus affirms Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

84. See Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:10.

85. Robin HS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969, pp. 270f.

for such action orientation. He refers to Yuhanon Mar Thoma's Pastoral Letter of 30 March 1949 and the New Year Message of 1950.⁸⁶ The pastoral letter dealt with the church's duty to struggle for human rights, and only in that context to speak of Christian social service. The New Year Message raised the question: Am I my brother's keeper, and answered it saying

The Bible says this is a question which was raised from the beginning of man's social life. Communism says that we are our brother's keepers. This does not refer only to spiritual salvation as some in the Church think, but also refer(s) to primary necessities of life as Communism says. Clothing, food, education, employment, shelter, medical aid – these are the primary necessities and the God given rights of human persons.⁸⁷

In the midst of the challenges of rapid social changes in India "with powerful ideologies, nationalism and communism and materialism" present in force, "the task of the Church," said Yuhanon Mar Thoma, "has to be redefined and the techniques of Christian evangelism reoriented..." fusing Christian values with the tenets of social democracy. In his opinion "capitalism and communism" are "false alternatives which have to be met by a peaceful but powerful ideology of democratic social transformation for justice which retains its roots in evangelical Christianity."⁸⁸ He held that the "future of democratic government in India depends upon the solution to these problems," and attempted an integration of evangelical reformation with democratic social revolution. His book *Christianity in India and a Brief History of the Mar Thoma Church* dealt with the role of the church in independent India's social and economic life, pointing to the need to look afresh at the relation between social outlook and preaching. All these inspired MM Thomas to develop his theology of social action.

During this period, a study guide on the Role of Missions in Present Day India, *Revolution in Missions* reported Lesslie Newbigin's similar

86. See MM Thomas, *Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel*, Madras: CLS, 1977, pp. 24-26.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

view that the Church should "identify itself much more thoroughly with the life of the nation" and participate "in rural development, in industry, in politics and social change."⁸⁹ This mood dominated the church in India in the fifties and the following decades. Thomas became the pioneer architect of an Indian Christian theology of the *karma marga*.

89. Lesslie Newbigin, "A Time for Decision" in Blaise Levai, *Revolution in Missions, A Symposium Report* intended for further study and discussion, Vellore: Popular Press, 1957, p. 273.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Contribution of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society

The influence of the indigenous theologians, both pioneer and contemporary, would have died a natural death if there were no attempts to preserve their contributions in printed form and to make them available for further study within the wider church. In the Indian setting, soon after Independence structures emerged which aided both to preserve and propagate as well as encourage further indigenous theologising. We shall consider two such structures and their programmes to gain insight into ecumenical developments in the Indian indigenous understanding of the church's mission, the priorities and problems. First, the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society at Bangalore and then the Ecumenical Christian Centre at Whitefield, a satellite township near Bangalore. These were indigenous developments with authentic concern for Indian society, yet they were influenced by ecumenical developments in the worldwide church.

The church in India, seeing herself as God's servant to the nation, often expressed her mind on a number of issues of public importance through the National Christian Council of India. In order to study and produce literature on such issues the NCCI established structures such as the Christian Institute for the Study of Society (CISS) and the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns (CLSC).¹ Both were organised in the early fifties, greatly under the influence of ecumenical developments through the first and second assemblies of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam 1948 and Evanston 1954), the East Asia Study Conference at Bangkok 1949, and Lucknow 1952 of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches.² Evanston organised a three year worldwide study on "The Common

1. See PD Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.), *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: NCCI & CISRS, 1960, preface p. iv (henceforth *Nation Building*).

2. *Ibid.*, p. iv.

Christian Responsibility towards Areas of Rapid Social Change" under the leadership of Paul Abrecht of the WCC Department of Church and Society.³ MM Thomas commented on this as "one of the most important points of evangelistic outreach."⁴ As everywhere around the world, Christians in India also found themselves surrounded by a rapid social change that made them "skeptical of the relevance of Christianity for modern life."⁵ In many Asian countries which attained independence in the forties and early fifties after World War II, the churches soon began to take

national and local initiatives to consider and reformulate their Christian social witness in the new setting. This was partly in continuation with pre-Independence initiatives and partly new.⁶

Vital contributions were made by

organisations like the economic life committees of the national Christian councils, the great agricultural institutes, schools of social work, organisers of rural and other service projects under Christian auspices as well as movements like the Christian ashram movements in India.⁷

In conjunction with these developments, the NCCI through its CISS organized a major event in January 1956 at Bombay, "A Study Conference on a Socialistic Pattern of Society."⁸ This conference defined certain crucial issues for further study by Christians in the areas of India's political life, economic development and rapid social change of the rural and urban setting, and recommended a three year follow-up study programme under the auspices of the Ecumenical Study Commission of the NCCI in collaboration with the WCC. MM Thomas was appointed part-time executive secretary and the study was carried on in close association with the regional Christian councils, the study department of the Student Christian Movement, the Christian agricultural institutes, the Christian colleges, the Raipur Christian Retreat and Study Centre, the Christian

3. For a report of this study see Paul Abrecht, *The Churches and Rapid Social Change*, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1961.

4. See MM Thomas, "The Asian Churches and the Study of Rapid Social Change" in *Ecumenical Review*, 37:1 (Church and Society: Ecumenical Perspectives, Essays in Honour of Paul Abrecht), January 1985, p. 17.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

7. *Ibid.* Thomas quotes from *Social Questions: The Responsible Society in World Perspective, An Ecumenical Survey*, New York: Harper, 1954.

8. See *A Socialistic Pattern of Society: Report of an Ecumenical Christian Conference*, Bombay, January 1956, NCCI & CISS, 1956.

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9. *Nation Building*, pp. 1-2.

10. The Millers Road named the Devanandan See Godwin Shiri, *Christianity for CISRS*, 1982, p. 179. evaluation of CISRS, in C

11. Devanandan served MM Thomas, who was as 1976) and retired to a life director in 1976. Herbert and a host of others served

12. *Nation Building*, pp. 1-2.

Institute for Study of Society and Committee for Literature on Social Concerns. Devanandan and Thomas observed that the whole programme exerted wider influence upon the church in India, since the study, consultation, education and publication of literature were all interdependent and simultaneous.⁹

The various study, research and literature programmes in the intimately related fields of Indian religion and society were soon united under one agency in October 1957 when the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) was formed, integrating the CISS, CLSC, the Research and Training Centre for Hinduism and the Bombay Follow-up Study Programme. CISRS was located at Bangalore, close to the United Theological College,¹⁰ under the leadership of PD Devanandan and MM Thomas as director and associate director.¹¹ The study started at Bombay in 1956 continued through CISRS with the following objectives:

1. To work out the elements of a Christian understanding of certain crucial issues in the political, economic and social development of modern India;
2. To enter into conversation with socially conscious non-Christians, both secularist and Hindu, in order to consider together the nature of an adequate social philosophy for the new India, and to work out the basis of Christian co-operation with them in social action.
3. To help the Church in India to rethink the pattern of her life, mission and service and to reorient her policies and programmes accordingly, with relevance to her call to social witness in a developing nation.¹²

A major source for our understanding of the theology of mission that developed during the early decades in post-Independence India is the large quantity of literature produced by CISRS. As said by Mathai Zachariah, general secretary of the NCCI, a study of CISRS literature

9. *Nation Building*, pp. v-vi.

10. The Millers Road property where CISRS was located was bought and named the Devanandan House and made the headquarters of CISRS in 1964. See Godwin Shiri, *Christian Social Thought in India 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982, p. 179. Shiri gives an historical sketch of the activities and an evaluation of CISRS, in Chapter V, pp. 178-195.

11. Devanandan served as the first director (1957-1962) till his sudden death; MM Thomas, who was associate director for that period, became director (1962-1976) and retired to a life of research and writing. Saral K Chatterji became director in 1976. Herbert Jai Singh, Richard Taylor, GR Karat, ME Parabhakar and a host of others served as associates.

12. *Nation Building*, pp. vi-vii.

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8. See *A Socialistic Pattern of Society: Report of an Ecumenical Christian Conference*, Bombay, January 1956, NCCI & CISS, 1956.

"could help appraise the study concern of the church in general in India,"¹³

GR Karat describes "the timeliness of the CISRS to the political situation" in India, observing that educated Indian youth were caught on the one hand, between the awakening of a social conscience and the despair with the insensitive, unjust and unresponsive social and political order of the day, and on the other between a pious Christian upbringing, which, while it gave them a deep commitment to the Gospel, yet left them deeply dissatisfied by its teaching that social action and politics are snares of the devil, especially for Christians;¹⁴

with no other alternative but to be "driven in despair to the Communist camp." The Christian community was "largely apathetic or fearful of politics or even to social concern beyond the call of charity."¹⁵ Men like Malcolm Adisheshaiah, Chandran Devanesan, KK Chandy, KA Mathew, MM Thomas, MA Thomas, Rallia Ram, David Chellappa, SW Savarimuthu, SK Rudra, Principal Malvea and missionaries like RR Keithahn encouraged the student population to think that

Independence was not merely a political cause concerned with the taking over of power, but a quest for the ability to restore human dignity and render too long delayed social justice to millions of our fellow-men...¹⁶

CISRS gave the structure to arouse "a conscience alive to society" in Indian Christians. The purpose of CISRS as expressed in its constitution reads:

to assist the Churches in India in their total task of witness and service by:

- a. Promoting scholarly study and research in the fields of religion and society;
- b. Establishing vital contact with non-Christian thought and initiating conversation with those of other religions and living issues;
- c. Helping the members of the Church to fulfil their responsibilities in Church and Society;
- d. Interpreting the social implications of the Gospel in India;

13. See Mathai Zachariah's "Editorial" in *NCCR*, LXXXIX, August 1969, p. 245.

14. See GR Karat, "One Man's Thoughts on the C. I. S. R. S. ", *NCCR*, LXXXIX, August 1969, pp. 253-255.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 253 & 255.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

- e. Promoting and distributing relevant literature; and
- f. Relating these studies to similar programmes of study in this country and elsewhere.¹⁷

CISRS was to become as a watchman on the wall in serving the church when secularism and secularisation followed scientific and technological triumphs, posing deep questions concerning the nature of the Christian faith and mission in contemporary society.¹⁸ The demand was to function as a "scholarly critical body" in the midst of a society which "is itself not yet essentially critical in its outlook on life,"¹⁹ churches which "seem to be satisfied that the difficult task of study they are supposed to do is taken care of by CISRS,²⁰ and church leaders who were often too busy to do anything about implementing what were resolved and published. Hence reports and publications failed, lacking critical application to generate further thought and action. Eugene Heideman illustrates the problem:

It is sometimes difficult to implement the findings of one conference because ecclesiastical leaders must hurry back to attend the Council of a second followed by a retreat sponsored by a third...

Anyone who shows creative insight at any level, scholarly or otherwise, is soon caught up into administrative positions. The result is that few men who would normally be among the clientele and implementers of CISRS thought are able to find the time to do the kind of critical thought and action hoped for by the Institute.²¹

The timeliness of CISRS, Karat retorted, was "to a community largely apathetic or fearful of politics or even to social concern beyond the call of charity." Shackled by its "minority communalism"²² in a "fox-hole"

17. Quoted in "The CISRS – Some Facts" in *NCCR*, LXXXIX, August 1969, p. 249. The agenda originally came from a list of seven points listed in the section on "The Indian Situation" in the article "Responsible Society," compiling the findings of the Indian Ecumenical Study Conference of 1952, Nagpur. See *IJT* 1:2, November 1952. Cf. RW Taylor, "From Consensus to Controversy...." *IJT* 25:3&4 July–December 1976, pp. 194f (henceforth *From Consensus*).

18. GR Karat, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–255.

19. Eugene Heideman, "The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society," *NCCR*, LXXXIX:8, August 1969, p. 259.

20. Mathai Zachariah, "Editorial" *op. cit.*, p. 246.

21. Eugene Heideman, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

22. Alexander D. John, "The Future Role of CISRS," *NCCR*, LXXXIX:8, August 1969, p. 270. Cf. Nirmala Srinivasan, "Majority Communalism Vs Minority Communalism: Is it a threat to Indian Secularism?," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, September–December 1983, pp. 138–146.

existence, the Christian community - dominated by a conservative cultural ethos - denied the freedom of experimentation²³ to those few who developed a creative desire to critically apply the findings.

On a national level, due to socio-religious and political reasons, the majority community did exhibit a "rejection of Christianity." But this was not to hinder the church from her mission or to send her into a hidden fox-hole existence. Aptly did Mathai Zachariah identify the task ahead:

There is a strong resistance to the work of the Church at different levels and this has led us to the necessity of developing a new Christian apologetic. Perhaps the Christian apologetic for our times in India is best set forth not so much in the polemical defence of the Christian position as in an explanation of the difference between Christian and Hindu understanding of religious fundamentals, and also in showing how India as a nation could benefit by a value system "informed by Christ." This may not exactly be the "unknown Christ of Hinduism" but a Christ who still has saving power, and this saving power in terms understood by the intellectuals in India is what the CISRS is called upon to interpret.²⁴

CISRS ventured to do just that. Church bodies, Christian colleges, theological institutions and Christian organisations became full members making annual contributions; others became associate members, about fifty in all, whose representatives formed the council which appointed the executive committee as the governing body of the institute. CISRS attempted to enable its member bodies and the wider church to rightly understand the context of India and the issues faced by church and society from religious, social, economic, political and psychological angles; and to find ways for positive action for betterment. Much of the help of CISRS to the churches was through its consultations and publications. These could be seen in three phases; 1957 to mid-sixties, mid-sixties to mid-seventies and mid-seventies to the mid-eighties.²⁵

Before proceeding to consider these phases, we must note here that what was developing in India as the mission of the church in all this had a bearing upon what the churches began to take as their task in the nation. In order for accomplishing the task, they revised their approach

23. Alexander D John, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

24. Mathai Zachariah, Editorial *op. cit.*, p. 247.

25. This three phase treatment of CISRS through its first twenty-five years is found in Godwin Shiri, *op. cit.* Cf. Brindavan C Moses, "Self Understanding of the CISRS in the Context of Indian Reality," *RS*, XXXI:3, September 1984, pp. 27ff.

to theological training for ministry in their institutions of ministerial formation. By the time CISRS was formed in 1957, already a further study was undertaken by the NCCI following the Ranson study, specifically to address the question of theological education after 1945. MH Harrison coordinated this study as an evaluation of and a continuation to what the Ranson report had proposed. His report *After Ten Years*²⁶ is dealt with later in this book.

The First Phase: 1957 to Mid-Sixties

During the first phase, 1957 to the mid-sixties, the attempt was to understand society, religion and social change in order to promote Christian participation in nation building. Major ideals and ideologies of the time were studied such as national liberation, the secular state, and democracy and socialism, beside crucial issues in the political, economic and social development of modern India and the Indian religious consciousness in relation to Jesus Christ and his good news.²⁷ Such studies revealed the expectations, hopes and optimism within CISRS circles about the democratic experiment initiated under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. The first decade anticipated that

The new social and religious consciousness expressed through movements at the macro and micro levels would lead the country to a more humanised existence.²⁸

After three years of study, the results were summed up and an enquiry was made into the implications of the findings for the life and service of the church, evaluating "the traditional patterns of Christian participation in, and service to, the life of the nation" and suggesting "new patterns which may be more creative for the new setting;" and the study concluded with a conference at Nasrapur, Pune, in January 1960.²⁹ Reports of these studies along with the reports of the NCC assemblies of 1958 and 1959 were compiled together and published by CISRS as *Christian Participation*

26. See the report by MH Harrison, *After Ten Years – A Report on Theological Education in India*, Nagpur: BTE/NCCI, 1957, pp. 71. Cf. his "Notes on the History of Protestant Theological Education in India" in *Fifty Years of Service 1910–1960*, UTC Golden Jubilee Volume, Bangalore: UTC, 1960, pp 14–30.

27. See Saral K Chatterji, "The CISRS and the Indian Reality," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, September–December 1983, pp. 16ff.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 17; BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

29. See the report "New Patterns of Christian Social Witness of the Church in India – Nasrapur, January 1960," *RS*, April 1960. At this conference, 44 participants considered Christian participation in politics, economic development, building a new society and cultural life.

in Nation Building.³⁰ This volume became an excellent foundational work upon which Christian social thought could be developed and channelled into contemporary missiological involvement of the church in India. Over 300 people, laity and clergy, men and women, Christians and non-Christians, participated in the study process and thus the book represents a summary of the thought of the wider church in India.³¹ Covering topics such as "implications for political, economic and social participation in India; democracy, its dynamics and its problems; development and the problems of development; social structure, social goals, ideals of marriage, of family, rural and urban community developments; and the cultural foundations and theological issues in cultural development," the width and depth of this work made it a significant tool. Underlying these studies were the following assumptions that 1. "a Christian understanding of the problems of India and tasks" in mission would emerge only through an inter-disciplinary "corporate effort" of a wide variety of experts, the theologian – pastor – politician – sociologist and social worker; 2. India's search for "new foundations for her political and social structures" could be helped by Christian laity in their secular involvement much more than by institutional means; 3. "Indian people's quest for an adequate social philosophy" expressed in both Indian secularism and Renascent Hinduism could be helped towards positive development by Christian participation initially through dialogue and laterally by combined action; and 4. The church in India as a whole needs to stand together and "develop a Christian doctrine of society," in order to strive towards it, lest her efforts in mission dissipate for want of specific goals.³² Thirteen years after obtaining national independence their reference still to the "new setting" indicates that the task of settling into and finding the church's mission was to take several decades in independent India.³³

Another useful summary of the CISRS thought of the first decade is found in the 1963 Yale doctoral thesis of Bengt R Hoffman, "Indian Protestant and Orthodox Social Ethics, 1947–1962," revised, abridged and published by CISRS in 1967 under the title *Christian Social Thought in India: 1947–1962*.³⁴ Its five chapters deal with 1. Indian democracy.

30. PD Devanandan & MM Thomas (eds.), *Christian Participation in Nation Building: The Summing up of a Corporate Study on Rapid Social Change*, Bangalore: NCCI & CISRS, 1960, pp. xi + 325.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 311–325 gives a list of the participants of the Bombay follow-up consultations.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. viii–ix.

33. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

34. Bengt R Hoffman, Bangalore: CISRS Social Concern Series no. 14, 1967.

2. Indian socialism, 3. Nationhood and cultural unity, 4. Role of the church in social service and action and 5. The procedure of Christian ethical thinking in India. It is a sympathetic interpretation of the Indian Christian struggle for a new social ethics as part of the Christian confession, and it examines the same with academic objectivity,³⁵ scrutinising the reports and publications of CISRS in *Religion and Society* and the *Social Concern Series* for the period.

This period, under the leadership of Devanandan, was influenced by his vision of a "transforming community" with his concept of mission as *lokasangraha*.³⁶ Throughout this first phase there was a common consensus among the members of the CISRS movement. Hence the majority of the publications were collectively written.

Often an outline for a book would come out of a consultation; individuals would be invited to write draft chapters; then they would meet together in an extended "writing party" to hear and criticize each other's drafts; chapters would be rewritten and consigned to a common editor – to be published as a group work.³⁷

The Second Phase: Mid-Sixties to Mid-Seventies

The second period, extending from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies, saw the wars with China³⁸ in 1962 and Pakistan³⁹ in 1965, industrial

35. See (then acting director of CISRS) Herbert Jai Singh's "Foreword", *ibid*.

36. This is dealt with elsewhere in this book.

37. See RW Taylor, "From Consensus," p. 189. Examples of such group work include HFJ Daniel, et al., *Revolution and Reconstruction*, Bangalore: The Federal Council of SCM India, Pakistan and Ceylon, 1957; and Herbert Jai Singh & Mark Sundar Rao (eds.), *Indian Politics after Nehru*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1967. The study programmes used three methods: consultations where around 30 people got together for three to five days to develop corporate thinking on a crucial social issue; working parties of 5 or 7 writers producing booklets on topics of Christian social concern; and symposiums for Christian and non-Christian religious and social thinkers to contribute essays for discussion with a view to rewrite and publish.

38. See Neville Maxwell, *India's War with China*, London, 1970 and *India's China War*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972; BN Mullik, *The Chinese Betrayal*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971; K Subrahmanyam, "China's International Relations with Special Reference to India and Pakistan," *RS*, XVI:4, 1969, p 57; D Chellappa, "The Chinese Menace and Indian Christians: A Pastoral Letter," *SIC*, December 1962, p. 5; MH Samuel, "Inter-Asian Relations with Special Reference to the Sino-Indian Conflict," *RS*, X:2, 1963, pp. 58–67. Also cf. R Kothari (ed.), *Politics in India*, Delhi, 1970 and P. Chopra, *Uncertain India*, 1968.

39. The partition of India into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan still left a large

stagnation and recession, unemployment and inflation, mass struggles, political changes, increasing poverty and widening disparities of income and wealth, oppressed sections, unjust structures and monolithic political rule – all as components of a political and economic crisis in the country.⁴⁰ Linguistic and communal forces rose to prominence, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamilnadu,⁴¹ tribal uprising in the North-East,⁴² Dalit assertion of rights and privileges in Western India⁴³ and the "sons of the soil" slogan wielded divisively by the militant Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. The earlier optimistic expectations of the Nehruvian liberal humanist approach were belied in the sixties. Disenchantment led to cynicism across the land.⁴⁴

"The CISRS responded to this crisis situation admirably" through "a more searching analysis of the political and economic processes" touched by "the much more concretised concerns of the period."⁴⁵ In 1969 CISRS initiated a study programme in Delhi on national legislation and political and economic issues with a widened scope by bringing in social scientists, social activists, political thinkers, economists, theologians and others.⁴⁶ Their diverse perspectives and experiences meant that the earlier consensus was not possible now. That "there was no longer an

number of Muslims in India and a considerable number of Hindus in Pakistan. Border skirmishes have often occurred, and Pakistan has been an unfriendly neighbour to India. India fought with Pakistan in aid of the liberation of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh. The United States under the then President Richard Nixon supported Pakistan with arms during this war between India and Pakistan.

40. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, pp. 27f. Cf. Kuldip Nayar, *India: The Critical Years*, Delhi: Vikas, 1971.

41. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 41. Popularly known as DMK, it is a political party which arose from Periyar's (EV Ramaswamy Naicker) Self Respect Movement and the agnostic Dravida Kazhagam with a strong anti-Brahmin spirit and pride of Tamil supremacy. See PD Devanandan, *The Dravida Kazhagam: A Revolt against Brahminism*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1960; P. Spratt, *DMK in Power*, Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1970; cf. Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Princeton: University Press, 1968.

42. See MM Thomas and RW Taylor (eds.), *Tribal Awakening*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1965, reprinted in 1983.

43. See VT Rajashekar Shetty, *Dalit Movement in Karnataka*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1979.

44. See Herbert Jai Singh and Mark Sundar Rao, *Indian Politics after Nehru*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1967.

45. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

46. See "Director's Report," *CISRS Biennial Conference Report*, 1969, p. 26. These reports are henceforth referred to as BCR.

consensus in social analysis, nor in economic analysis, nor in political analysis"⁴⁷ was recognised by CISRS when attempting to compile an exhaustive collection of post-1960 Christian writings on social questions to formulate a planned teaching volume on Christian social thought. Henceforth, CISRS publications became collections of individual contributions instead of group works, as exemplified by *Political Prospects in India*⁴⁸ and the clash of ideas and strategies became normal. The Delhi project aimed to study legislation from "a national and social point of view reinforced by the Christian understanding of man and society" and to make the findings available to the members of parliament, the churches and the general public in order to develop contacts in all these circles.⁴⁹ The project was proposed by EV Mathew and led by SK Chatterji. It dealt with specific and concrete questions of social justice, people's participation in decision making, proximate goals of democracy and social change, structural change and development.⁵⁰ MM Thomas claimed that

The project served the very vital purpose of projecting an image of the church as concerned with humanity, in the light of Christ, rather than with the interests of only the Christian community or religion or even of religion in general.⁵¹

CISRS desired to develop vernacular literature and regional structures and hence appointed GR Karat as associate director with special responsibility to develop regional programmes. In the second decade, CISRS activities included:

1. All India consultations...
2. Regional consultations.
3. Regional study and training institutes for different church and university groups.
4. Formal dialogue with adherents of other faiths.
5. Staff

47. *From Consensus*, p. 189. Cf. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

48. Saral K Chatterji (ed.), Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1971. The Naxalbari movement was a nationwide underground resistant group of Naxalites who took active part in organising, educating and leading people at the grassroots level to agitate and fight for their rights. They were considered dangerous since they used explosives for violent and subversive activities. What appealed to Christian social activists was their organising ability at the grassroot level among oppressed people. For an account of the movement see B Dasgupta, *The Naxalite Movement*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1974, pp. 282.

49. "The Director's Report," *BCR*, 1969, p. 26.

50. See such studies taken up in a volume like SK Chatterji (ed.), *The Coalition Government*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1974.

51. "The Director's Report" in *BCR*, 1971, p. 28; cf. Godwin Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 180 and BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

leadership in conferences and extension courses organised by churches or other bodies. 6. Sponsoring research students, fellowships and scholars. 7. The collective writing. 8. Publication of books and pamphlets on religion and society. 9. Issuing quarterly journal of *Religion and Society* and the weekly journal of *The Guardian*.⁵²

The Third Phase: Mid-Seventies to Mid-Eighties

The third period from the mid-seventies turned the disenchantment and cynicism into a positive force. MM Thomas' action oriented *karmamarga* view of mission began to shape CISRS thought and involvement

by encouraging and assisting grass-roots organisations to fight injustice and oppression and by providing some solidarity and linkages through CISRS and Joint Programmes and also through wider fellowships like Fellowship for Justice Concerns, and also by studying and analysing the sufferings and aspirations of the oppressed people for the purpose of action.⁵³

The transition was triggered by national developments of the period. A mass upsurge and protest against political corruption and misrule was evidenced by the Naxalbari, Gujarat and Bihar movements and the railway strikes. The widespread loss of faith in the efficacy and relevance of party politics found nationwide leadership in the JP movement; Jayaprakash (JP) Narayan spoke for a non-party political formation in the form of a mass movement with people's participation. This and the Naxalbari type of organising at micro level attracted the attention of CISRS in the mid-seventies.⁵⁴

The year 1974 was an important landmark in the history of the CISRS movement. A major conference brought together representatives of various social action groups of different religious and ideological backgrounds to grapple with "The Emerging Styles of the Struggle for Social Justice in India."⁵⁵ For the first time CISRS came in close contact with action groups and through them with grass-roots level realities. "By their very nature, the action groups can work only at the micro level, working with particular sections of oppressed people, organising them. They reach out into unexplored, neglected areas of concern, build local leadership tackling local issues, involve the people and channelise their

52. Godwin Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

53. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 29f. Cf. Sk Chatterji, *The Coalition Government*.

55. See the interpretative report "Emerging Styles of Struggles for Social Justice in India, Bangalore, 24-29 October 1974," *RS*, XXII:2, 1975, pp. 49-59.

56. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

power to fight against injustice, exploitation and oppression. There is normally a high degree of commitment on the part of the action groups to the cause and to the people with and for whom they work; and there is a willingness to suffer and sacrifice for the sake of the oppressed. But on the contrary, there are action groups which have no clear goals or ideology and lack the necessary skills of conscientising and organising.⁵⁷ "Actions without the perspectives provided by studies tend to be directionless."⁵⁸ Action groups are often criticised for factionalism and for burning out with a swing of the pendulum from aggressive political action to mere economic programmes like tailoring, dairy farming, etc. Hence a "study of action in process," to assist them in making timely corrections, was proposed by RW Taylor.⁵⁹

The 1974 conference had far-reaching significance for the perspectives of the CISRS movement. As a result, two long-range study programmes were launched; 1. A study of Indian Marxism⁶⁰ and 2. A study of class-caste structures.⁶¹ In 1975 CISRS underwent a self-evaluation study by Hunter P Mabry, RW Taylor and John S Augustine.⁶² Elaborate discussions based on their report on the concept of the praxis of CISRS led to two clear mandates at the 1975 biennial meeting; 1. To pursue action-oriented studies and 2. To involve women in CISRS programmes. It was resolved that "CISRS should pursue an effective ideological and theological direction relevant for the changed situation of the mid-1970s."⁶³

"The chief architect and main thinker"⁶⁴ thus far of the CISRS movement, MM Thomas, retired from his directorship in 1976. Of the significance of Thomas and Devanandan, Richard Taylor comments that

The pre-eminent social thinker of the movement...was MM Thomas.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

58. See SK Chatterji, "The CISRS and the Indian Reality," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, September–December, 1983, p. 18.

59. See RW Taylor, "Study and Action: General Concerns II," a paper read at the Silver Jubilee Convention, March 1983.

60. See CISRS publications from this study, Joseph Vadakkan, *A Priest's Encounter with Revolution*; Bastiaan Wielenga, *Marxist View on India in Historical Perspective*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1976.

61. See BC Moses, "Study and Action: Caste-Class Issue and CISRS Perspective," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, 1983, pp. 22–39; and M Dewanji, "Caste-Class Issue in Eastern India," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, 1983, pp. 40–52.

62. See HP Mabry, "The CISRS Today - Preliminary Report on a Self Study," *BCR*, 1975, pp. 25–46; J Augustine, "The Report of the CISRS Survey," *BCR*, 1975, pp. 47–49.

63. *Chatterji*, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

He was also the paramount encourager and enabler of all others in the movement who engaged in social thought. In this he was himself encouraged and supported by PD Devanandan and some others... it is almost impossible to overestimate the crucial importance of this encouragement, enablement and support to this blooming of Christian literature on social questions.⁶⁵

It was to their credit that so many Indian Christians have been able to write and see their writings in print. Whereas there were hardly authors to be found for the Christian Students' Library series published for the Senate of Serampore College and for the *Indian Journal of Theology*, Devanandan and Thomas determined to have only Indian authors for the majority of their works in CISRS, and thus promoted Indian Christian writing.⁶⁶ George Mathew commends them and reports that 75% of the articles in *Religion and Society* were by Indian authors and that a very large proportion of the articles dealt with Indian social problems.⁶⁷

Saral K Chatterji, when he became the principal of Serampore College founded the William Carey Study and Research Centre with MM Thomas as chairman.⁶⁸ Later when he took up directorship of CISRS, action-oriented programmes and joint actions such as Class-Caste (1977), Joint Women's (1977), Rural Studies (1978), and Social Education (1981) programmes were taken up by CISRS. Publications like *Samata*, *God's News for Women*, *Women in Praise and Struggle* beside *Religion and Society* exemplify the developments.⁶⁹

June 1975 to February 1977 proved a testing period for the CISRS movement, since it chose to oppose the Emergency Rule of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. We must pause here to briefly consider this.

65. *From Controversy*, p. 188.

66. *Ibid.*

67. See George Mathew, "Unity of Study and Action: The Indian Experience and the CISRS," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, 1983, p. 63. Cf. his "Content Analysis of Theological Journals in India," XXVIII:4, December 1981, pp. 67-92.

68. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 31. Chatterji was committed to the wider involvement of CISRS. See his "Foci of CISRS Responsibilities in India Today," *Director's Report for Biennium 1977-79*.

69. BC Moses, *op. cit.*, p. 30. *Samata* is a documentation journal of the caste/class study programme of the CISRS and WCSRC. Volume I published in 1981 had articles on "Dalit Panthers", "Women Workers in Silk-Reeling Industry", "Church's Participation in Developmental Struggles", and on "The Myth of National Integration". The two books on women were edited by Jyotsna Chatterji and published by WCSRC in 1980 and 1983, respectively, as a collection of Bible studies written by various women leaders in the church in India Cf. Goodwin Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

Emergency Rule and Christian Response

The Christian community, as noted earlier, went through phases of great hope in Nehruvian liberal humanist leadership and policies, and the great disappointment of seeing his approach belied in the sixties.⁷⁰ An unexpected turn of events found his reins as prime minister pass on to his daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and later his grandson Rajiv Gandhi, with only short interludes of prime ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Morarji Desai. The Indian National Congress, which gave steady leadership for the first two decades, split into the Old Congress and the Indira Congress in 1969,⁷¹ a split which initiated the political leadership of the nation into incessant party strife, with defectors crossing party boundaries for communal and corrupt reasons.⁷² There was no credible opposition party to challenge and correct the ruling Congress till after the split of the Congress and the threat of emergency rule; even the Janata coalition after the Emergency did not last long.⁷³ Lacking any unifying factor such as a single language, race, culture, religion or royal family, India has its struggles of national integrity.⁷⁴ Influenced by Britain in every possible way, India seems to have found a substitute royal family in the Nehru dynasty. How long such a dynastic rule will prevail in an increasingly educated, industrialising, progressive democracy is anybody's guess.

After the historic Congress split in 1969, Mrs. Gandhi's image improved by the way she handled the Bangladesh liberation struggle.⁷⁵ Her *garibi*

70. See Herbert Jai Singh and Mark Sundar Rao, *Indian Politics after Nehru*, *op. cit.*; Amaury de Reincourt, *The Soul of India*, *op. cit.*, chapter 19; Charles Bettelheim, *India Independent*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968; AH Hanson and Janet Douglas, *India's Democracy*, London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1972; Robert L. Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970.

71. *Indian Politics after Nehru*, *op. cit.* For a history of the INC, see chapter 18 of Reincourt, *op. cit.*, and others referred to earlier.

72. Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970 and *Party System and Election Studies*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967; Norman D Palmer, *The Indian Political System*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961; M Pattabhiram (ed.), *General Elections in India 1967*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967; Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity*, 1962, *Party Building in a New Nation 1967*, Chicago: University Press and *State Politics in India*, Princeton: University Press, 1968.

73. Cf. Reincourt, *op. cit.*, chapter 21; Dilip Hiro, *Inside India Today*, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, pp. 331.

74. See Sajal Basu, "A Modern Myth," dealing with the myth of national integration in *Samata*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1987, pp. 23-25.

75. As mentioned before, India aided East Pakistan in its liberation struggle

hatao (banish poverty)⁷⁶ economic programme raised great expectations and hopes in the masses. The period of great optimism she aroused swept her to victory in the parliamentary elections of 1971 as well as the state legislative elections in 1972, with a sweeping majority.⁷⁷ But the optimism was short-lived. Economic deterioration made for uneasy developments in the form of widespread frustration, violence, strikes, lock-outs and shortages. 1974 saw the worst economic crisis. Almost the whole nation was paralysed by an all-India railway strike. Even without the mutual mud slinging and accusations that the factions within the Indian Congress – the Socialist Forum and the Nehru Forum – indulged in, the opposition took stock of the nation-wide frustration. Under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan "total revolution" was launched in a series of activities;⁷⁸ all political forces which were against Mrs. Gandhi rallied around JP Narayan. Many Indian Christian social thinkers who realised the lack of any ideological clarity or sense of direction in Mrs. Gandhi's Congress and went through a time of great disillusionment during 1973–1974,⁷⁹ now for the first time shed their traditional pro-Congress loyalty and openly took an anti-Congress stand in favour of socialism.⁸⁰ They linked with JP Narayan, though MM Thomas was critical of the middle class element in his movement. Christian social thinkers saw the Dalit Panther Movement as an example of an effective strategy for mass struggle⁸¹ and felt convinced of the need for extra-parliamentary action in addition to parliamentary politics. As a result of growing agitations, the

against West Pakistan, and the new-born nation of Bangladesh remained a friend of India with Mrs. Gandhi's patronage. Later, of course, problems arose as Bengali-speaking Bangladeshi refugees began to pour into West Bengal and Assam, and citizenship questions emerged at election times.

76. See CT Kurien's critique on *garibi hatao* in his *Poverty and Development* Madras: CLS or CISRS, 1974, pp. 78–90.

77. Cf. David Taylor, *India: The Politics of Change*, London: Fabian Research Series no. 345, July 1980, pp. 15–28.

78. See S Suri, "Power Structures and the Political Process in India," *RS* XX:1, 1973, pp. 36ff. Cf. G Shiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 85f.

79. See SL Parmar, "Post-Election Reflections," *NCCR*, 91:4, 1971, p. 156; N Koshy, "Political Outlook in India after the Elections," *S/C*, June 1981, p. 2, and "Some Political Issues in the Country and a Christian Response," *NCCR*, 94:5, 1974, pp. 263ff.

80. N Koshy, "Editorial: A Call for Socialism," *The Guardian*, 52:22, 1974, p. 2.

81. N Koshy, "The Dalit Panther Phenomenon," *NCCR*, 94:5, 1974, pp. 245–247; "The Dalit Panthers and Their Manifesto," *RS*, XXII:2, 1975, pp. 24–38; MM Thomas, "Democracy, Development and the Masses," *The Guardian*, 52:44, 1974, pp. 1f.

Congress government was brought down in Bihar and Gujarat. The mood spread nation-wide to overthrow Mrs. Gandhi's government at the centre. When in June 1975 the Allahabad High Court judged Mrs. Gandhi guilty of corruption in the conduct of her election to parliament in 1971, JP Narayan and all the opposition demanded the resignation of the government and the holding of new elections. Mrs. Gandhi was urged from within her party to step down in the interest of democratic functioning in the country. Sensing the danger to her leadership and power, she tightened her control on the situation by declaring nation-wide internal emergency rule on 26 June 1975. A law called Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) gave the cover to imprison over 100,000 citizens – Marxists, Naxalite suspects, fanatical Hindus of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and others. They were kept in jails without trial, ill-treated and tortured. Freedom of the press was curbed. Radio and television were controlled by the ruling government to boost its image,⁸² and the constitution was amended to convenience.⁸³ Mrs. Gandhi's second son Sanjay, who had no political office as such, wielded great political power, interfering to force family planning through compulsory sterilisation and urban renewal through forcible evacuation of poor slum dwellers. When the houseless poor rioted, mass shootings were resorted to.⁸⁴ Mrs. Gandhi's twenty point programme⁸⁵ buffered the mass reaction against emergency rule for a while, but

as the repressive measures increased, and as the economic policies of the government basically remained unaltered, people began to be skeptical of the emergency....Economic planning was going in a capitalistic direction...⁸⁶

supporting the demand of the rich capitalists for easy profit and high living. The parliamentary elections scheduled for 1976 were postponed indefinitely. The agitation of people and the underground activity against the emergency increased greatly from within the country, and from

82. News and broadcasting, All India Radio and Doordarshan television were all brought under Mrs. Gandhi's direct control as Prime Minister.

83. An example is the 42nd amendment (1975) of article 381, making election disputes relating to the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Parliament beyond the jurisdiction of the courts.

84. See A Roy, "The Indian Events from the Indian Perspective" in SK Chatterji (ed.), *The Meaning of the Indian Experience: The Emergency*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1978, pp. 6f.

85. For an interpretation of the Twenty-Point Programme, see *Rs.* XXIV:2 & 3, 1977.

86. See S Suri, *op. cit.*, pp. 36f.

elsewhere the Western democratic liberal forces showed much displeasure and protested against Mrs. Gandhi's emergency rule on human rights grounds.⁸⁷ Philip Potter, the then general secretary of the WCC, wrote to Mrs. Gandhi appealing to lift emergency rule.⁸⁸ So did Yap Kim Hao on behalf of the Christian Conference of Asia.⁸⁹

But the leadership of the churches in India went through a moment of untruth, fully supporting Mrs. Gandhi "even after the regime's despotic character was apparent, even as it became increasingly violative of human rights and the rule of law."⁹⁰ The leadership of the Church of North India gave its "unflinching loyalty" and "enthusiastic support" to Mrs. Gandhi and in a letter communicated to her its two resolutions from its September 1976 executive committee minutes; firstly, recording deep gratitude and appreciation for the "dynamic leadership" and assuring her of its support for her different economic programmes through church-related institutions and agencies; and secondly, conveying the CNI's displeasure and disapproval of the WCC's and CCA's appeals to the prime minister, stating

The CNI does not sympathise with the views expressed by these councils on the Indian situation by assuming, unsolicited, the role of the champions of Indian freedom and would not desire the WCC or CCA to make public statements and comments resulting in a false distorted picture of India.⁹¹

The NCCI decided to hold a dialogue with the prime minister, since a few individual members were critical of the emergency rule and insisted on dialogue on some vital issues of national life.⁹² But the idea was dropped as support for Mrs. Gandhi increased within the executive and instead NCCI "took the ecumenical agencies to task, accusing them of 'misinterpreting'"⁹³ and meddling in Indian affairs. In letters to CCA and Church's Council on International Affairs of the WCC, acting secretary Mathai Zachariah wrote,

Churches in India are mature enough to handle a matter like this on

87. See N Koshy, "The Emergency in India: International Reactions and Interpretations," *WCC Exchange*, No. 2, March 1978, p. 12.

88. See Potter's letter dated 9 October 1975 printed in *RS*, XXIV: 2 & 3, 1977, pp. 3f. This was followed by a letter from the WCC International Affairs Director to WCC member churches and the NCCI, *ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

90. RW Taylor, "Churches in India: A Moment of Untruth," *Christianity and Crisis*, 38:10, 26 June 1978, p. 165; cf. G Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

91. "CNI Executive Resolutions," *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, p. 49.

92. See *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, pp. 26ff.

93. See G Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

their own. Outside help need be offered only when Churches here ask for it.⁹⁴

Though there was similar support for Mrs. Gandhi from the leadership of the Church of South India, there were those who, while welcoming the twenty point programme, desired the restoration of freedom to enable people's participation, and who grew increasingly critical of Mrs. Gandhi's position.⁹⁵ The blanket support of the churches, Shiri observes, was rooted in "the minority complex, fear of the Hindu communalists, institutional interests and faith in social discipline for development."⁹⁶ RW Taylor attributed CNI support to its being "a tiny, socio-economically weak community living in the midst of a rigid Hindu region of North India," unable to transcend its community interest.⁹⁷

There were also important Indian Christian social thinkers who supported the emergency because they believed the twenty point programme to be a viable step by Mrs. Gandhi in bringing effective changes in the economic life of the nation. Russell Chandran, SL Parmar, AK Thampy, Mar Gregorios, Frank Thakurdas and influential members of the Christian Peace Conference and the Christian Union of India were of this category.⁹⁸ They saw emergency rule as "an inevitable consequence of the 'anarchic' situation which had prevailed in the country,"⁹⁹ a "temporary" "corrective" measure, "a breakthrough in achieving the amelioration of some social evils."¹⁰⁰ They were critical of JP Narayan and in their eagerness for economic change they uncritically supported emergency rule. Chandran, for instance, claimed that there was no denial of press freedom in India, and said for a healthy situation in the country, some parts of emergency rule should be continued and that the government should not allow the press or political parties "to slip back into their former irresponsible behaviour."

94. M. Zachariah, "Editorial: A Letter to the CCA and CCIA," *NCCR*, 97:1, 1977, pp. 3f.

95. Mrs. Gopal Ratnam, General Secretary of CSI, wrote in favour of Mrs. Gandhi. See *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, pp. 45-47; but the CSI Synod itself was cautious and critical. See the CSI Fifteenth Synod Resolutions of 13-17 January, 1976 in *ibid.*, pp. 44f.

96. See G Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

97. RW Taylor, "The Churches in India," in *Christianity and Crisis*, 38:10, 26 June 1978, p. 165; cf. G Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

98. See G Shiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-97; cf. "Resolution of Christian Union of India" (Feb. 1977) in *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, p. 95.

99. Quoted from "A Statement of the Christian Union of India (dated 5 July 1975)" in *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, p. 87.

100. JR Chandran, *The Guardian*, March 1976, p. 1.

Such a moderate stance was unacceptable to others, such as MM Thomas, CT Kurien and other members of CISRS and the Urban Industrial Rural Mission. CISRS led the Christian opposition to emergency rule by stating the conviction that

Freedom is a God-given inalienable right of man as man that when freedom is denied, the awakening of the masses into a self-conscious people will be halted minimising the participation of the people in (their) own development, jeopardising justice itself, and turning state into tyranny.¹⁰¹

Thomas provided a theoretical critique of Christian opposition to emergency rule through his many writings and, when some of his writings were censored, he continued to communicate his views through an occasional mimeographed newsletter titled "Religion and Society" secretly sent to his friends.¹⁰² Kurien and Chatterji did much to mobilise people against the emergency and developed contacts with grass roots activists and underground organisations.¹⁰³ This provided the first opportunity for Indian Christian social thinkers to work with like-minded non-Christians of which Chatterji reports,

A new community has come up beyond the traditional so-called Christian community because of the bitter political experience.¹⁰⁴

Two important consultations furthered the understanding and courageous action of the Christian opposition to emergency; "Democracy and social justice in India" in May 1976¹⁰⁵ and "Why the ruling Congress should be voted out" in February 1977.¹⁰⁶ Their statements were also widely circulated among non-Christians. The offer of "stability" by curbing freedom, which Mrs. Gandhi promised, was rejected by the 1977 consultation saying, "stability without democratic consensus is a synonym for tyranny."¹⁰⁷ MM Thomas and Chatterji urged the core of the CISRS group to hold strong in their opposition to the non-democratic trends of

101. See "Editorial", *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, p. 1.

102. These newsletters were later published in book form entitled *Response to Tyranny*, Delhi 1979; as well as reproduced in *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977.

103. See RW Taylor, "Churches in India," *op. cit.*, p. 166.

104. Report of a CISRS-CCA-WCC Consultation on the Meaning of the Indian Experience (of Emergency), *WCC Exchange*, No. 2, March 1978, p. 1.

105. See "The Report of the Consultation on Democracy and Social Justice in India - The Next Phase, Bangalore, 25-28 May 1976" in *RS*, XXIV:2 & 3, 1977, pp. 124-128.

106. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-133.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

the prime minister. But CISRS and MM Thomas faced severe tests on account of this. The YMCA pulled out of CISRS. Thomas' writings aroused censorship from governmental sources and disapproval from Indian church leaders. The Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios parted company with Thomas, as he wrote to Philip Potter of WCC.

... [I] have to disassociate myself with several of the statements of Shri M.M. Thomas, the Chairman of the Central Committee. I do not want to say either that he has a martyr complex or that he is making use of his international position to risk what other Indian Christian could hardly risk...his criticism is not sufficiently far-reaching or deep-going and therefore essentially misleading.¹⁰⁸

Thomas retorted to this as "unfair" criticism and wrote criticising Gregorios' understanding of the emergency.¹⁰⁹

Thus CISRS gave undoubted leadership to the socio-political thinking of the Christian community, extending its influence in partnership upon even non-Christian and secular social action groups. It advocated "radical change as against the *status-quoism* of the churches."¹¹⁰ CISRS was not alone in this stance. The Urban Industrial and Rural Mission, another NCCI branch based at Bangalore, took a similar stand. UIRM took on the problems and issues faced by people in rapidly industrialising Indian society, as well as in the affected rural economy. This structure provided the channel through which the churches could study these issues and develop possible solutions or directions for amicable change. In Bangalore, this NCCI structure worked in close link with the Industrial Team Service of the St. Mark's Cathedral. It used its official arm, *Challenges and Responses in Mission Today*, to communicate its concerns and reports.

These structures co-sponsored studies and cooperated in consultations of each other as they all were addressing a common context and attempting to theologise and contextualise the mission of the church for the changing society in India. One such study that the CISRS co-sponsored with the ITS/UIRM and the Church of South India is dealt with later in the chapter on the Church of South India.

108. Gregorios' letter dated 13 November 1975 is printed in *RS*, XXIV: 2 & 3, 1977, pp. 53-60. See particularly p. 59.

109. See MM Thomas' "Religion and Society" newsletter no. 2, *ibid.*, pp. 229-232.

110. See this view elaborated in JR Chandran, *The Secular Witness of E. V. Mathew*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1972, pp. 209ff; cf. Frank Thakurdas and Nawaz Dawood, *Issues in the Struggle for Justice*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1975. See also *From Consensus*, p. 191.

RW Taylor comments on the change of UIRM under CISRS influence:

They started with personal potential and group relational movements such as sensitivity training which tends to accept the social status quo and help people to be happier within it – thus ideologically begging basic socio-political questions – and such as transactional analysis which also tends to do this and to trivialise interpersonal reality as well. From this really reactionary base some in this movement have moved on to methods of motivating and enabling small groups for really radical social change.¹¹¹

MA Thomas and the Ecumenical Christian Centre at Whitefield, Bangalore, also played a significant role in arousing political consciousness in the Indian church, which we shall consider shortly.

The influence of CISRS and its leaders was felt and acknowledged by non-Indian church leaders as well. Bishop Erme Comba of Philippines claims Thomas' writings as having aroused his social conscience.¹¹² At the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the CISRS, Philip Potter attested to the influence of CISRS upon world-wide ecumenical thought and action, commenting on

the pioneering role the CISRS has played, especially in arousing Third World Christians, starting in Asia, to do their own thinking in the fields of development and nation-building, the role of culture and religion in awakening conscience of people towards change for social, economic and political justice, and therefore the importance of inter-religious dialogue and doing theology authentically in our context for liberation from the dominant and domineering so-called universal theology coming from Europe and North America.¹¹³

Reminiscing about the varied contributions made to enhancing the

111. *From Consensus*, p. 191. Cf. MJ Joseph (ed.), *Toward a Strategy for People's Organization in India*, Nagpur: Christian Service Agency, 1974.

112. When Bishop Erme Comba, president of the NCC of Philippines, was invited to give the Subir Biswas Memorial Lectures in 1985, he said in his lecture "Faith, Action and Politics", "As far as theological insights are concerned, I testify to the fact that I have my earlier education come direct from your country through my study of the writings of the venerable M. M. Thomas in the mid-seventies." See *Subir Biswas Memorial Lectures*, Bangalore: USRM, 1985, p. 2.

113. See Philip Potter, "Jubilee Convention Address," *RS*, XXX:3 & 4, September–December, 1983, p. 2. Potter goes to the extent of saying that "The founders of the Institute, Paul Devanandan and MM Thomas, were men who shaped the direction the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia were to take from their inception."

quality of the programmes of the WCC by men like Devanandan, MM Thomas, Russell Chandran, EV Mathew, MA Thomas, Stanley Samatha, Samuel Parmar, Saral Chatterji, CT Kurien, TK Thomas and many others, Potter remarked that

Indeed it has often been enviously remarked that the World Council was run by an Indian "mafia," and that "mafia" was centred around the Christian Institute (CISRS).¹¹⁴

...Indians have been the first Third World people to enter into critical dialogue with the First World and to do so with freedom and panache. The CISRS is the most conspicuous example of this...I can think of no other institute of this kind anywhere in the world which has been so influential and so productive.¹¹⁵

A Marxist scholar, Susan Ram, is quoted as saying in 1978 that in India CISRS represents "the growth of radicalised sections within the Church" which

expressed...conscious effort...to come closer to the left and democratic movement...taking up for study specific problems of development and social transformation.¹¹⁶

The achievements of CISRS were not without shortcomings. A study of them would prove a study of the failure of the church in mission in India. We shall identify the ones that relate to our concern in this book.

A Critical Evaluation of CISRS

CISRS has been criticised for its shortcomings. These points of critical evaluation help in steering the movement into a future of a more purposive and fulfilling course in identifying, clarifying, contextualising, evaluating and promoting the mission of the church in India.

First, we must take note of the lack of a vernacular principle in the work of CISRS. What the British empire put together into one nation was held together by the use of the English language. While state divisions in independent India were based on the fourteen major languages,¹¹⁷ the

114. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

115. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

116. Susan Ram, "Religion, Development and Political Organisation," *Social Scientist*, 7:5 December 1978, pp. 64f; quoted by George Mathew, "Unity of Study and Action," *op. cit.*, p. 63.

117. These 14 major state languages appear on Indian currency notes: Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Bihari, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil. This linguistic multiplicity plays a major role in the struggle for national integration. On linguistic communalism in politics,

language of the majority 60% living in the highly populated areas of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. Hindi, was declared the national language. This was much to the consternation and disapproval of southern states led by Tamilnadu which preferred English to remain both the national and international language. English continues for all practical purposes as the unifying national language, though Hindi has the official status of the national language. Like the church, the CISRS operated in English in its consultations, symposia and publications. This causes two problems; 1. It hinders the development of regional vernacular programmes; 2. It diminishes the influence on the emerging secular leadership which operates more in the vernaculars.¹¹⁸ These in turn detach CISRS from people at the grassroots level. The biennial meeting of 1967 took note of this problem and resolved to give priority to regional programmes.¹¹⁹ Articles commissioned by CISRS in 1969 to evaluate its work, indicate the urgency of regional programmes.¹²⁰

The realisation of the importance of vernacular literature by the leaders of CISRS is reflected in the 1967 memorandum. GR Karat, appointed associate director with the special responsibility to develop regional programmes in 1970, saw the problem faced by CISRS as a fraction of the larger national dilemma and national developments wherein the regional cultures and languages were becoming more prominent in education and politics, demanding that the regional situations in religion, society and church be taken more seriously.¹²¹ Mathai Zachariah therefore called for CISRS to simplify its publications and make them

see Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India, The Development of a Multi-party System*, 1957, 1962, pp. 319; DL Sheth (ed.), *Citizens and Parties: Aspects of Competitive Politics in India*, Volume 2 in the series On Man, State and Society of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies, Delhi; Paul R Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Bombay: OUP and University of California Press, 1966, pp. 262; Selig S Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, Princeton: University Press, 1960, pp. 350; Marguerite Ross Barnett, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India*, Princeton PUP, 1976, pp. 368.

118. See GR Karat, "One Man's Thoughts on the CISRS," *op. cit.*, p. 255.

119. See CISRS Biennial Committee Minutes in *BCR*, 1967, p. 9 and 1969, p. 12.

120. Articles by GR Karat, Eugene Heideman, Alexander John and the Editorial by Mathai Zachariah are quoted in these pages from *NCCR*, August 1969.

121. See the Memorandum on the Future of CISRS, *BCR*, 1967, p. 54.

available to the common man.¹²² GR Karat wrote that

Whereas the English-educated leadership, with all its faults, yet had in it the enlightenment and liberalism born of wider knowledge and experience, the new leadership, partly through no fault of its own, tends to be parochial and self-conscious. I believe it is vital that the virtues of the old order be transmitted to the new. Unfortunately, neither in the Church nor in the affairs of the nation does one see any realistic attempt to handle this problem.¹²³

After a few years of working to achieve regional strength, in 1975 he still was scratching the surface of the problems and stated his specific goals as:

1. Closer co-operation with the Church of South India in helping it to organise seminars on Church and Social Justice at the diocesan levels, and in helping with the follow-up programmes of the seminars;
2. intensifying the work in North India; 3. co-operating with other agencies in the regional areas, energizing them with expertise and financial support; and 4. producing literature in regional languages.¹²⁴

These were but repetitions of unaccomplished goals of 1969. Evaluating the progress in 1980, Godwin Shiri notes that "in the long run, the CISRS attempts to reach the regions were not successful."¹²⁵ The same holds true of vernacular literature production.

The problem of vernacular literature has had a history of its own. Krishna Pillai's works in Tamil, NV Tilak's lyrics in Marathi and developments of Christian literature in Gujarati, all were attempts to develop vernacular Christianity.¹²⁶ Theological education and theological formation were attempted in vernacular media by early missions, and later at the recommendation of the Decennial Missionary Conferences as well as the Lindsay and Ranson reports. Further emphasis came from the

122. See M Zachariah, "Editorial: The Concern for Study," *op. cit.*, p. 246.

123. GR Karat, *ibid.*, p. 255.

124. See Karat's Report in *BCR* 1975, pp. 88-96. Cf. Shiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 181, 184.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

126. Cf. AJ Appasamy, *Tamil Christian Poet*, London 1966; Robin Boyd, *ICT*, pp. 112-114. H A Krishna Pillai (1827-1900) was one of the best known Tamil poets, who wrote *Rakshanya Yatrikam* and *Rakshanya Manoharam*. See JC Winslow, *Narayan Vaman Tilak: The Christian Poet of Maharashtra*, Calcutta 1930; *ICT*, pp. 45, 112, 114-118. Tilak is known for his Marathi lyrics. For an account of the development of Christian literature in Gujarati, see Robin HS Boyd, "An Outline History of Gujarati Theological Literature," *IJT*, XII:2 & 3, 1963.

Harrison study. In the seventies the regional vernacular colleges, particularly the union seminaries, did develop vernacular theological education at higher levels. The Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches had a vital role to play in funding such developments in India.¹²⁷ We shall come back to consider this at a later point.

Secondly, we must note that CISRS failed to influence the churches at the local congregational level. It remained "distinctly urban, academic and intellectual," a club of educated Christians, a movement of experts from various fields who are theologically committed and socially conscious, "only pamphleteers" operating in the realm of ideas.¹²⁸ It represented only a small segment of the church. In 1969 Alexander John criticised CISRS as having a "space station existence," orbiting in space with the hope that ideas had legs and would be picked up on earth.¹²⁹ Although it was able to disseminate its ideas by readily disposing of 800 copies of all publications, its elitist academic stance created a gulf against the ordinary Christian laity at the grassroots congregational level. Eugene Heideman described the situation that

Despite the record of achievement the council is not fully satisfied with the results obtained so far. The CISRS has not been able to penetrate deeply into the life of the churches, nor have its studies led to adequate action in society.¹³⁰

This leads to a third criticism, that CISRS remained a thought club rather than an action-oriented programme. This was true of the early two decades, but changed during and after emergency rule in the third decade. CISRS faced the question of whether to cater only for highly educated readers or also to the common man, and whether to promote studies alone or studies including action.¹³¹ Though it did translate and publish a few of its publications in the vernacular,¹³² the emphasis largely continued to fall on providing resource literature in English for the intelligentsia. The concern for study was seen as a viable ministry in itself; study and action were seen as inseparable, and hence CISRS studies attempted to balance between theory and praxis. The importance of both was

127. The Lindsay, Ranson, and Harrison reports and TEF/WCC are dealt with elsewhere in this book.

128. Cf. Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 194; Alexander D John, "The Future Role of CISRS," *op. cit.*, pp. 267-268. AD John quotes from "Director's Report", BCR, 1967.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

130. CISRS Report for 1965-66, p. 9, quoted in Eugene Heideman's "Appraisal of CISRS", *ibid.*, p. 259.

131. Cf. Shiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 186f; BCR, 1967, pp. 12f, 53.

132. For an example, see Herbert Jai Singh's *My Neighbours*, 1965.

recognised though the accent fell more on action-oriented studies in the seventies.¹³³ Such a venture of CISRS to study issues is commendable in the Indian setting.

The churches today must learn to think. To a very large extent, they are today still living on the intellectual capital developed by missionaries and Indians from 1910–1930 or 1940. This capital is by now becoming all too small. In this situation, our temptation is to increase the velocity of action in order to cover up our lack of understanding. Thus the task of the Institute is not to allow the churches to substitute action for thought or thought for action, but to assist the churches to think in the midst of their action.¹³⁴

A fourth criticism relates to the type of thought and theology developed – that it was fragmentary and unconnected to ecumenical developments in theology. The whole gamut of theological developments in the Latin American, African and other Asian settings in the Southern hemisphere, as well as the developments in the North, were omitted from the materials used for providing a structure for Indian Christian Theology.¹³⁵ Theology of liberation, theology of revolution, theology of hope and such new developments were not taken seriously enough by Indian theologians and writers. Shiri makes the criticism that there had been only occasional references to them but no proper interpretative and applicational study of them in India.¹³⁶ Indian churches must become more open to theological reflections made in other Asian, African and Latin American countries, since they too face and theologise in similar situations socially and economically.¹³⁷ Though CISRS failed here, the younger generation is very much influenced by the new theologies mentioned, especially liberation theology, as its concepts were brought to India by ecumenical programmes organised by the NCCI in conjunction with CISRS and theological colleges. The emphasis on the need for mutual learning among Third World theologians and theologies became more pronounced with the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWoT).¹³⁸ In a recent address, EC John, the present principal of UTC, remarked on "the importance of...the inclusion of African theological

133. Cf. Shiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 186f; *BCR* 1967, pp. 15, 53; 1975, p. 21.

134. Quoted from *NCCR*, LXXXIX: 8, August 1969, pp. 264f.

135. Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

136. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

137. *Ibid.*

138. Russell Chandran traces the development of this Association (EATWoT) in his article "Emerging Issues in the Discussion of Third World Theologians," *RS*, XXV:3, September 1978, pp. 64–72.

insights in South Indian studies;" thus he affirms the growth of a corrective trend.¹³⁹

A fifth criticism relates to the failure of CISRS to help the church in India in sufficiently developing her witness in the midst of a religiously plural setting. Both GR Karat in 1969 and Godwin Shiri in 1980 raise this issue. Karat regrets that "owing to various reasons, the work of the CISRS in the field of religion has been less vigorous since the passing away of Dr. Devanandan," making "slower headway than its political and social thought."¹⁴⁰ In 1973 a CISRS self-study found that "a solid and significant link with the non-Christian community" remained "a goal yet to be achieved."¹⁴¹ MM Thomas saw the task as yet to be tackled, as he noted the need for developing a theology of religious pluralism in his book *Man and the Universe of Faiths*¹⁴² and laterally attempted such "an ecumenical theology of pluralism" in his *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake*.¹⁴³ Shiri comments that

CISRS needs to give more attention to the task of rethinking and redefining theological concepts in terms which will be intelligible within the Indian religious context. Some useful suggestions have been made in this regard, but the task itself is far from completion.¹⁴⁴

He points to an urgent need for understanding the theological categories of Indian religious tradition in order to make "Christian social thought and action more relevant to the Indian context."¹⁴⁵ Stanley Samartha had a key role to play in this arena as the first director of the dialogue sub-unit of the World Council. As part of the CISRS group of thinkers, he has drawn a significant blueprint after Devanandan, which taken seriously might have altered the course of the mission of the church in the religiously plural setting of India. Criticism made by the self-study in 1973 that CISRS

139. EC John succeeded Chandran as principal of UTC, Bangalore. At the Indian YMCA, London, on the occasion of the CSI Day 1988, he spoke on "Theological Education in South India," summarising developments since 1947. See *CSI News: The CSI Council in Great Britain*, London, No. 104, February 1989, p. 1.

140. See GR Karat, "One Man's Thoughts on the CISRS," *op. cit.*, p. 255.

141. See Hunter P. Mabry, "The CISRS Today: Preliminary Report on a Self-Study," CISRS Report for 1974-75, p. 29.

142. MM Thomas, *Man and the Universe of Faiths*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1975.

143. MM Thomas, *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake: Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Pluralism*, Geneva: WCC, 1987, pp. 122.

144. Shiri, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

145. *Ibid.*

remained predominantly confined to "male South Indian Protestant Christians" is changed with the inclusion of women and non-Christian resource scholars into the study processes in the post-emergency period.¹⁴⁶

Yet as we reflect on the impact that the CISRS has had on the church in India, "There can be little doubt that there are few things in India as significant as the CISRS for the life and work of the Church in India."¹⁴⁷ CISRS continues to give catalytic leadership in arousing the Christian community to address the issues that face them in contemporary India and to participate with the majority community in the demanding task of nation building. It gave its directors and colleagues the structure to effectively communicate their particular theological concepts and thus to shape an ecumenical theology of mission for the church in India.

146. HP Mabry, *op. cit.*, p. 29, quoted in George Mathew, "Unity of Study and Action," *op. cit.*, p. 65.

147. GR Karat, "One Man's Thoughts on the CISRS," *op. cit.*, pp. 257f.

CHAPTER SIX

The Contribution of the Ecumenical Christian Centre

Of no less significance for the thinking of the Christian community on her task of mission in India is the influence of the Ecumenical Christian Centre at Whitefield.¹ Unlike the CISRS, which was established by the combined effort of the NCCI, the ECC emerged from the vision of an individual Christian, Mandathethu Abraham Thomas, an ordained priest of the Mar Thoma Church.²

By 1960 one can notice a widespread search for a clearer understanding of Christian mission in India. This mood spread far beyond the confines of those within official employment of the NCCI. Clergy and laity together sought new styles of ministry, interpreting mission contextually. If Christian ministry is understood tri-frontally, as directed towards God, the world and the church,³ the ECC developed in the sixties to give the church in India an urgently needed impetus for "world-directed" ministry. It is "the outcome of a sincere search for a new style of Christian obedience."⁴

Since the history of the ECC is rooted in the vision of its founder-director MA Thomas, we shall first note the influences upon him. As a school boy in the early thirties, MA Thomas was active in the work of All Kerala Balajana Sakhyam, a cosmopolitan secular youth organization with the motto "We Serve." This and the Youth Christian Council of Action of South

1. Whitefield is a small satellite township to the south-east of Bangalore. ECC is a remote campus outside Whitefield equipped to host conferences and seminars accommodating up to 100 people. Its library, chapel, conference hall, hostels, dining hall, office and staff quarters buildings surrounded by fencing make it a modern academic yet practical mission compound, and a study centre with a difference.

2. See "The Vision," a chapter in Susy Nellithanam's *Ripples: Story of the Ecumenical Christian Centre, 1960-1980*, Whitefield: ECC, 1980, pp. 90; henceforth *Ripples*. "The Vision" explains the scheme of the Ecumenical Centre prepared by Rev. MA Thomas in 1961 at Madras, pp. 56-60.

3. See Samuel Amirtham, "Training for Future Ministry in the Church," *S/C*, Silver Jubilee Issue, 1972, p. 59.

4. *Ripples*, p. 23.

India affected the youth of his generation, sowing the seeds for Christian social thought to which they were to make "significant contributions" twenty years later.⁵ After college education, MA Thomas stayed in a slum in Trivandrum and worked with college students in slum development. His ideas, personality and plans took shape during those days of enthusiasm. Appointed full time secretary of the Inter-Religious Fellowship of India in 1935, he became acquainted with its chairman, Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the then vice-chancellor of the Benares Hindu University and later the president of India. Still in his twenties he became a devotee of the freedom movement, acquainted with Gandhi, Rajagopalachari, Zakir Hussain and other national leaders. Work with the Student Christian Movement in Madras and Vellore area from 1944 shaped his ecumenical outlook. After his participation at the 1947 Oslo conference and 1948 Amsterdam WCC assembly and theological study at Westcott House, Cambridge from 1947, he was ordained a priest in the Mar Thoma Church. After twelve years of involvement in rural and urban parishes which gave him the opportunity of understanding the struggles of the poor, he gained further experience serving in the USA for eighteen months as co-secretary of the 1955 quadrilateral conference of the Students Voluntary Movement. He felt constrained to start a secular ashram for socio-political action and "determined to risk his life for this venture."⁶ When vicar of the Mar Thoma Church in Madras in 1960, he prepared a scheme of starting an ecumenical centre and shared it with many, such as Bishop David Chellappa of the CSI Madras Diocese, Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Thoma and Bishop Philipose Mar Chrysostom of his own church, DT Niles of Sri Lanka, Masao Takenaka of Japan, Newton Thurber and Harvey Cox of USA and others. Chellappa offered him land with some buildings in Poondhamalli in Madras. Niles urged him to attend the third assembly of the WCC at Delhi in 1961 and to discuss his scheme with Indian and other church leaders. In November 1961, MA Thomas wrote the "Scheme of Ecumenical Centre" and sent it to various friends and church leaders.⁷ In 1962 he moved to Bangalore parish and after some vigorous consultations the centre was founded on 5 January 1963 in rented premises. At the first governing

5. For information on the YCCA, see George M John, *Youth Christian Council of Action: 1938-1954*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1972. The influence of this organization upon their lives is acknowledged by men like MA Thomas, Russell Chandran, MM Thomas, EV Mathew and many others. Cf. MM Thomas, "The Asian Churches and the Study of Rapid Social Change," *ER*, 37:1, January 1985, p. 18.

6. See *Ripples*, p. 26.

7. *Ripples*, pp. 56-60.

council meeting in the parish hall of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore, under the chairmanship of Principal JR Chandran of UTC, MA Thomas presented a budget of rupees sixteen lakhs for the establishing of the centre. The council shared his vision and courage and on 27 June 1964, an eighteen and a half acre plot of land with an old dilapidated house in Whitefield was bought. Ten more acres and buildings were added later.⁸ The centre office shifted to the Whitefield premises in 1967. By 1972 the facilities grew to include a conference hall, library, chapel, seminar halls, lounges, dining hall, hostels, family quarters, guest house and office block, a total of twenty-five buildings to accommodate 150 people with modern conveniences.⁹

Of the purpose and pilgrimage of faith undertaken by the ECC, MA Thomas says,

Christ stands in the centre of the Centre...

The Centre itself is a small community experimenting a new style of life which is not identical with an ashram or a university. It is a new dimension of Christian obedience, a search for the unity of mankind....It is a leap into the unknown.

We do not know what we are.

The great God is above and the wide world is around.

It is God's response to man's obedience...an act of God in response to faith and obedience...a humble instrument in the hands of God to witness to the truth of the living Christ.

...a meeting place of people – labourers, farmers, unemployed and the youth...

The encounter continues, commitment deepens and action begins.¹⁰

The objectives of the centre are found in the scheme given in *Ripples*. The centre is to create opportunities for members of different churches, races and nationalities to come closer for mutual contact, fellowship and exchange of views; to hold conferences and intercessions to promote deeper unity among the churches, encouraging sympathetic understanding of each other's heritage particularly in the fields of liturgy, new techniques of evangelism and experiments in Christian art; and to initiate discussions on the church's social responsibility. It also intended to conduct vocational courses for clergy, evangelists, teachers, students,

8. *Ripples*, p. 24.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 28f, 23f, 52f.

engineers, medical staff, legislators, lawyers, businessmen, labourers, political workers, government workers, economists, scientists, agriculturists and publishers; and to publish literature to keep the church alive to ecumenical relevance. In keeping with these objectives, numerous seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences and consultations were sponsored by the centre. They in turn influenced the participants drawn from the many churches of India. Participants take the influence of the ECC and its programmes to their churches all over the country. The types of programmes run by the ECC between the years 1963–1980 illustrate the width of the vision of the ECC.

ECC PROGRAMMES: 1963–1980¹¹

1. Politically Oriented Programmes

A two day conference in 1969 on the question "Should students escape politics?" facilitated dialogue between students and representatives of the government and university. During 1970–71 a series of 14 "Schools of Politics" were held in the South Indian towns of Hyderabad, Madurai, Trichy, Mangalore, Bellary, Vellore, Guntur, Rajahmundry, Alwaye and Madras. They provided the opportunity for critical study of policies and programmes of various political parties of India, and of current political and economic trends and those aspects of the constitution relating to these. Students, lecturers, social workers, political workers, pastors, seminarians, trade unionists and journalists participated and discussed topics such as "Democratic Socialism, Democracy and Dynamics of Change," "Media and Politics," "Secularism in India," "Constitution and Practice," "Communalism and Indian Politics," "Federalism in India," "National Goals," "Food and Hunger Crisis" and "Current Economic Trends in India." There were also courses on "Social Political Issues." A national seminar for judges, lawyers and members of the parliament on "The Judiciary and the Parliament" led them to resolve on a national objective of achieving a society wherein all its members are assured of a decent livelihood, equal opportunities and the right to work, eradicating all the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving justice. Specific national political situations were studied at occasional seminars, such as the Bangladesh issue. The theme of "liberation" was identified from within South Indian fiction with a view to promote sensitivity among people about their tragic struggles on the socio-economic, ethnic and spiritual fronts. The ECC took an analytical look at the contemporary "Asian Trends" and noted that though freed from imperialist powers, Asia

11. Much of the information in this and the following sections is taken from *Ripples*.

countries are "still trapped in their rat-race for power" and that "As long as there are agents of capitalism in the region, the social, economic and political trend will be one of oppression and exploitation." The consultation desired the elimination of multinationals, military governments and bankrupt leftist forces from Asia, and opined that "In the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided on its (i.e., Indian Ocean's) waters." The ECC went beyond CISRS in studying "Liberation Movements in South Africa" and in having a Latin American educationalist, Paulo Freire of Brazil, bring his insights on the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed."¹²

2. Sociologically Oriented Programmes

"The Christian Family in the Industrial Society," "Value of Human Life in Suicide, Violence and Abortion," "Dating," "Social Responsibility," "The Cancer of Corruption," "Communalism in Indian Politics," "Harijan Oppression in Independent India," "Cinema and Social Change," "Social Attitudes in Karnataka Villages," "Concept of Liberation in South Indian Fiction," "The Bengali Novel and Social Life," "Dialogue on the Eradication of Underdevelopment," "Seminar on Rural Urban Disparities," "Rural Indian Realities," "Human Rights" and "Health Service" were some of the topics around which the ECC brought together Christians of many different traditions, along with non-Christian thinkers, writers, artists and others to enhance their mutual understanding and contribution to the nation. Schools of sociology were held in co-operation with the All India Association of the Schools of Social Work.

3. Spirituality and Mission: Practical Theology-Oriented Programmes

The ECC has sponsored and co-sponsored programmes on issues such as "What is Mission" and "What Mission is Not," "Mission in the Light of Emerging Theology," "The Christian in a Secular World," "Bible Today," "Christian Hymns and Lyrics," "Congregation and Its Purpose," "The Role of the Laity," and "Christian Responsibility." The stress was on mission as ecumenical, de-Westernised and internationalised, with a positive bias towards rediscovering the gospel in a Hindu setting. The trend of thought is expressed in the statement

We should not go to others with ready-made theology. Instead, by listening to and understanding the Indian mode of life and thought

¹² Paulo Freire of Brazil popularised his educational principles, developing methods of educating and conscientising the poor masses. His books, particularly *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, are popular. He served with the Education Department of the WCC, which helped spread his views around the world. It was in such a situation that the ECC had a consultation with him as the resource person in 1973.

and by confronting the people through service and by living with them, our theology should be formed.¹³

4. Education Oriented Programmes

Between the years 1968–1977, the ECC conducted the National Citizenship Academy,¹⁴ an annual six month post-graduate course of an "intensely political nature." This was unique in the history of the church in India. Ten to twelve young men and women were enabled to ponder in depth the structure of society, political parties, administrative set-up and topics of socio-political relevance through research, lectures and discussions, to emerge as "agents of social change." Mission was understood as definite social change. Theses were written on subjects such as "Drop-outs," "India's Place in Asia in the 70s," "A Survey of Poverty in India," "Impact of Industry on Whitefield," "Modernization in India," "Naxalbari Movement in West Bengal," "Concept of Justice in the Old Testament," "Language Problem in India," "Encounter with Contemporary Education," "Middle East," "Panchayat Raj as an Instrument of Democracy," "Women in Indian Politics after 1947," "The Problems of Slow Learners in High Schools," "Church's Attitude towards Communist Ministries in Kerala," "Inflation and Deflation," "Cinema and Non-Violence," "Rural Indebtedness," "Unmarried Mothers," "Non-Alignment," "Diplomacy and Foreign Policy," "Change and Urbanization," "Science and Energy," "Indian Agriculture" and "The Role of the Opposition in the Parliament."¹⁵

Young university-educated researchers who came as those satisfied with the legacy of India's past were awakened to the "cruel systems" that hindered national progress and the "apparent lack of political will behind the progressive policies of the government." They left ECC normally with a dedication to engage in the establishment of a "new India." The ECC claims that in spite of the societal structures that resist change and dampen the enthusiasm and vigour of youth, many who took the course "kept the flame alive" and worked with the church's agencies for social action.

In 1972 ECC initiated the Vicharodaya College¹⁶ for dynamic education to awaken social concern among young women. Twenty young university educated women were admitted to stay for a period between six months to a year to study existing social patterns and unjust structures with a view to understand what social action and community work involves in

13. *Ripples*, p. 48.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

15. *Ibid.* These theses are held at the library of the ECC.

16. Vicharodaya means "dawn of knowledge;" *ibid.*, pp. 15f.

the Indian setting. The study included work with nearby village women, discussing with them "the problems of hygiene, literacy, nutrition, savings and self-employment," teaching them to sew and helping them in their *balwadi*.¹⁷ They became involved in discussions on socio-political trends, newspaper reviews, seminars, debates and private study and readings in the library to widen their outlook.

Both the National Citizenship Academy and the Vicharodaya College were "experiments in non-formal education, not affiliated to any university and not job-oriented." Their significance lies in countering the effects of the Indian educational system which remained at the lowest ebb, "meaningless" and "no longer relevant," with a decaying process revealed through incessant strikes and discontent in the universities. The ECC claimed that its "major concern behind these two residential post-graduate courses was to undo the harm done by university education. Their uniqueness lies in the life together beyond the divisions of class, caste and language – a source of inspiration for a lifetime."¹⁸

The ECC's concern for education as a key to social change led it to organise various conferences. The Conference for Village School Teachers (1977) focussed on rural realities; as depicted by them:

The child comes to school for three days, absents himself for 15 days and then comes again for three days. When the master seeks an explanation, the parents break their silence.

"Sir, we have a goat which has to be cared for. Anyway, what is the use of education; our children are not going to become great." Sometimes the child will stay away if his only pair of clothes have been washed and are not yet dry. Often he comes with an empty stomach with ragged clothes. Many of them have no books, not even slates!...

These children are dirty and unhealthy but they are talented.¹⁹ Teachers helplessly recount such tales about "the budding flowers of tomorrow's revolution" whose destiny needs to be part of the concern of Christian mission. A five-day seminar on "Education: Oppression or Liberation?" brought together Christian educators, Gandhians, Marxists, political workers, government servants and other educationists to discuss the need for re-appraisal of the educational system of India, with Paulo Friere as the resource

17. Since the village children's schools - *balwadis* - run by the government were inadequate, Christian agencies often got involved in *balwadi* work.

18. *Ripples*, pp. 14-16.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 12f.

person. When ECC co-sponsored a national seminar on "Changing Society by Social Work" with the All Indian Association of the Schools of Social Work, the reports aroused popular study among those schools to explore the incorporation of political education into their curricula. At an "All India Consultation on Community Development" it was identified that relief operations should be combined with revolutionary consciousness lest community development projects contribute to the perpetuation of injustice. Various developmental case studies aroused desire for an alternate strategy for development based on local funds alone.

The ECC recognised that a change in the educational pattern demands efficiency in administering the change process. Hence it convened a week long course on "Efficiency in Administration" for principals, administrators, executives and leading clergymen; a three day institute on "Church Administration" and week-long courses on "Personnel Management in Hospitals." The effectiveness of "participative management" was proposed with enthusiasm as something which can bring in a new creative dimension to most institutions in India. Areas of study included personnel management, selections, interviews, service conditions, legal interpretation, disciplinary action, welfare benefits, industrial law, collective bargaining, negotiations and union agreements, human relations, principles and methods of communication, delegation of power and decision making, and purchase, store and inventory control.

5. Media-Oriented Programmes

Writers' institutes on "Christian Participation in Journalism," seminars on "Media and Politics," "Cinema and Social Change," "Press and the People," Folk Theatre and Social Change" and two week courses on "Journalism" were all sponsored and conducted by the ECC to enable the church in active participation in national life and nation-building involvements.

6. Programmes to Interpret Legal Issues

The role of the judiciary, the supremacy of the constitution, the practicality of the legal system and state power in obtaining the rights of the masses were all studied at a seminar on the "Judiciary and Parliament" in 1972. A course on "Christian Law in India" facilitated an understanding of laws applicable to religions and charitable trusts, freedom of religion, conversion and its consequences, the Foreign Contributions Act, certain fundamental and educational rights of minorities in India, etc.

7. Programmes for Women Concerns

The ECC's major contribution to women was through its Vicharodaya College, which is mentioned above. When the year 1975 was declared the International Year of Women by the United Nations Organization, a three-day national conference at ECC condemned it as a capitalistic hoax.²⁰ It observed that women could be "a moral force in society" and a "militant organised force for political participation," and stating that in India the situations of men and women were not dissimilar, it proposed that the need is for women to fight alongside of men against the systems of oppression. Another consultation of women at ECC on "Women in Development" resolved that

In a country like India the struggle for economic and social justice is prior to the emancipation of women. Women in India will unite in a struggle to emancipate the masses but not in a fight purely to liberate women.²¹

The portrayal of "Women in Art Forms" such as literature, cinema, painting, sculpture, theatre and advertising were considered at a women students' three-day conference. Their protests against the portrayal of women as docile, chaste and helpless or as vamps, non-entities other than in conjunction with the male and never intelligent in their own right as individuals was registered. The ECC facilitated several gatherings of women to assist in their self-understanding, solidarity and action.

8. Programmes for Youth

Through a series of study camps for teenagers, the ECC studied their attitudes to education, educational systems, teachers, family, society, religion and ethics. Youth problems were studied through gatherings of women students and working girls, and the emerging youth culture was probed into by university student conferences at ECC. They questioned the role and structure of religious organization for social development, and favoured the use of coercion for political change. The executives and leaders of youth organizations met in a five-day "Christian Youth Meet" and realised that "Politics is the instrument for change in our society" and that "their Christian ideology can be effective only through gearing the programmes towards politicization of the masses" and that there was "the need for restructuring their programme planning for a deeper involvement in the present political set up." The keynote of the statement adopted by the consultation was:

²⁰. *Ibid.*, pp. 11f.

²¹. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Christian youth organizations have to plunge into the mainstream of national life shedding their communal colour...to make life both human and dignified.²²

The reluctance of the church to adapt to changing situations and to the needs of the young people, and the irrelevancy of the existing structures were intensely criticised by participants, young men and women, priests and elders at the ECC "Conference on Youth and Worship" in 1973. The motivation to renew and move forward was amply created by such gatherings planned by the ECC through the years.

ECC Publications

As a result of the numerous seminars, consultations and conferences the ECC had innumerable reports, resolutions, statements, papers, theses and research findings which were a rich source of relevant study material for the church in India. Publishing became a complementary role as the ECC made these items available in print.

The Contributions of the ECC

As its major contribution the Ecumenical Christian Centre has provided a base with modern conveniences of accommodation, library, conference halls and chapel for the church to utilise for creative study and reflection. Its leaders were available as resource catalysts to kindle the thinking at the many gatherings. A major attempt of the ECC was to arouse the church for "political awareness." But awareness alone is insufficient. Hence participation and action were promoted. More time had to be spent in "preparing the Christians for active participation" before any "actual participation." Hence ECC programmes are overweighed with attempts of preparing people for action. MM Thomas' "Mission as Karma Marg" finds expression in training material at MA Thomas' ECC. Thus the two Thomases, friends from their boyhood, continued to affect the mission theology of the church in India. Action is for change. The urgent areas where changes are needed, such as education, mass communication and polity and the structure of the church were addressed by ECC programmes. With Paulo Freire the theme of "education for liberation" was considered for the Indian setting. Schools of politics, economics and sociology, non-formal and relevant education through the National Citizenship Academy and the Vicharodaya College, were all attempts to arouse Christian socio-economic and political awareness. The place of fiction, films and literature in social change were taken up for study. The church's inner life and polity were considered at all levels with various

22. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

age groups. Concepts of unity and the need for united action with non-Christians were studied, interpreted and explored from within the cultural ethos of India.

The ECC does not claim to be a success in all that it attempted. But it provided much-needed experimentation to bring food for thought for the pilgrim journey of the church in India. It acted a watch-dog in the political context of the nation as it did during the emergency rule of Mrs Gandhi. The visit of JP Narayan to ECC, the Vigil India Movement and the link with action groups all helped carve a radical image for the ECC in bringing the church in India to a point of steady progress into relevancy in her practical theological reflection and action. The affects of CISRS are both complemented and enhanced by the contributions of the ECC. It appears too "political" to a large sector of Indian Christianity which is rooted deep into a largely conservative cultural ethos. But the attempts have a genuine gospel concern and Christ-centredness, as the founder-director's words quoted above reveal. In the words of a visitor, at ECC, there is "no special spirituality," but an attempt to "face it with that sense of humour rooted in faith."²³ To the eye of faith that seeks understanding and relevance, there is much that is positive and good in the contributions of the ECC.

MA Thomas was followed by KC Abraham, Jonathan Gnanadasan and Susy Nellithanam in directing the programmes of the ECC. A later addition in the eighties has been the School of Ecumenical Theology²⁴ under the principalship of Samul Rayan. This programme aims particularly to assist theological educators in India to come to an ecumenical perspective in their theological teaching, thus to enable further growth of Indian churches into ecumenical oneness, unity of faith and action.

23. Quoted from Lukas Vischer in *Ripples*, pp. 74f.

24. In 1986 the governing council of the Ecumenical Christian Centre under the chairmanship of MA Thomas organised a committee to pursue a programme to be run at ECC called the School of Ecumenical Theology. An initial questionnaire was sent to all theological college principals, church leaders and ecumenical bodies. A consultation brought these together to discuss and decide upon the programme, its validity, curriculum and finances. Later Samuel Rayan was named the principal, and Fr. Kuriakose the dean. The programme aimed to serve Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Churches, true to its ecumenical nature.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Implications of Inter-faith Dialogue

Nation-building, as was noted, dominated the concern of India and Indian Christians immediately after independence. But "national integration" remained ever threatened as it faced the problems of linguistic communalism, religious fanaticism and factional politics.¹ The Christian community on the whole attempted to remain neutral and in favour of national integration. This meant that as a minority community, unlike that of the Sikhs who sought a separate state² and the Muslims who lived in incessant tension with the majority Hindu community,³ they had

1. See Paul R. Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Bombay: OUP, University of California Press, 1966; Margnerite Ross Barnett, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India*, Princeton University Press, 1976; Selig S Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, Princeton University Press, 1960; Myron Weiner (ed.) *State Politics in India*, Princeton University Press, 1968; Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System*, 1957, 1962; D Sheth (ed.), *Citizens and Parties: Aspects of Competitive Politics in India*, Delhi: Centre for Study of Developing Societies; PD Devanandan, *Dravida Kazhagam: A Revolt against Brahminism*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1960; Sajal Basu, "A Modern Myth" dealing with the myth of national integration, *Samata*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1987, pp. 23-35; DM Ravi Prasad, "Key to National Integration," *The Bulletin of Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, IX:1-2, January-June 1986, pp. 76-81; KV Varughese, "Growth of Communal Parties and Vote-banks: A Challenge to Secular Democracy," *RS*, XXXIV:1, March 1987, pp. 20-30.

2. See Kushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton University and Oxford, 1963; John Clarke Archer, *The Sikhs in Relation to the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Ahmadiyyas*, Princeton: PUP, 1946. Sikhs began to demand a separate state for themselves under the leadership of militant and fanatical leaders who gathered arms in the Golden Temple of Amritsar. Mrs. Gandhi's handling of the situation led to her assassination by a Sikh.

3. See Theodore Gabriel, "Inter-Religious Conflicts in India: The Dynamics of Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar, 1498-1947," unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1986; Gene Robert Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in India*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1975.

to work out their understanding of nationhood and Christian citizenship in order actively to promote both national integration and secular democracy.⁴ The Indian historical situation called for a search for a theology of religion and mission in the context of religious pluralism, in the words of Lesslie Newbigin,

Outstanding (Indian) Christian thinkers...saw both the renaissance of Hinduism and the growth of a concern for nation-building...[as] part of the consequences of the impact of Christ upon Indian society. They therefore called their fellow Christians to the work of interfaith dialogue in the context of the quest for national unity with the conviction that this was part of the continuing work of Christ in Indian society. The basis of their call to dialogue was in their Christian faith.⁵

Following trends set by men like K T Paul, the National Christian Council through its Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society attempted such an understanding.

P. D. Devanandan – “Preparation for Dialogue”

Devanandan started in the direction of interpreting the Christian gospel from an inter-religious perspective, particularly the Hindu cultural context. As noted earlier, had he lived longer he might have given leadership to such efforts at interpretation. He laid the foundation for what was later to become a popular trend in the dialogue programme of both the national and international ecumenical movements. We noted the influence on Devanandan from E Stanley Jones' evangelistic methods, including his round table discussion with Hindu intelligentsia and dialogue with the general public.⁶ Though we are unable to draw neat lines to link the influences, we should make mention here of the tendency towards inter-religious interaction in Indian Christian pioneers such as Pandita Ramabai, Sadhu Sundar Singh and a host of others.⁷ Devanandan aimed

4. See KT Paul, *The Responsibility of Christian Citizenship in India - Some Practical Suggestions*, Bangalore, 1923.

5. See Richard W Rousseau (ed.), *Inter-Religious Dialogue: Facing the New Frontier*, Sranon, Ridge Row, 1981, p. 15; quoted in MM Thomas, *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake*, Geneva: WCC, 1987, pp. 112f and 120.

6. See Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925.

7. See Robin HS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969 and 1975, wherein he deals with the attempts of many male pioneers. He fails to deal with Pandita Ramabai, and acknowledged the same in his interaction with the author. See Nalini Arles' thesis on Ramabai's attempts at dialogue.

identifying the place of the Christian minority in the Indian national search for finding an adequate social philosophy and new foundations for her political structure. Such an identification could only be possible through active participation and interaction with the majority community. On a practical level this then meant "active inter-religious interaction" and "co-operation in social action."⁸ Devanandan hence concentrated on the meaning and implication of such interaction, believing this to be the way forward in Christian mission in India.

Whereas interaction and participation on the secular level presented no real problem to the Christian community, the implications of such interaction to "Christian mission" and its purpose of "evangelism" as "conversion" and "church growth" (i.e., the numerical expansion of the church's boundaries) were explosive. Devanandan spoke of "God's redemptive activity outside the Church" with a theocentricity transcending confessionalism; but he died before expounding his point fully.⁹ Like AG Hogg, he on the one hand attempted to locate the seeking and finding God in other religions while at the same time he insisted on the uniqueness of the Christian faith,¹⁰ which Keithahn thought was a sign of Devanandan's enslavement to missionary conservatism.¹¹ Though E J Sharpe related Devanandan's view to the liberal "anonymous Christianity" view, Devanandan did see a need for the conversion of a non-Christian individual to the Christian fold and the continued relevance of baptism.¹² Whereas many who claimed to be "conservative evangelicals" concentrated on the inward journey of the non-Christian into the church through conversion and baptism, Devanandan attempted to interpret the outward journey of the Christian into the world in a ministry of reconciliation, which we already noted as his *loksangraha*-mission. Within his lifetime Devanandan was unable to develop this theme fully.

Devanandan's contribution to dialogue was on a preparatory level, as indicated by the very title given to a collection of his thoughts in the

8. Cf. Devanandan, *Resurgent Hinduism: Review of Modern Movements*, 1958, p. 5 and *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, 1960, p. viii. Both published by Madras: CLS for CISRS.

9. Morton's thesis, "PD Devanandan, MM Thomas and the Task of Indigenous Theology," Nottingham University, 1981, p. 72.

10. See Devanandan, "Recent New Testament Scholarship and the Indian Church," NCCR, 1951, p. 486.

11. Keithahn in a personal interview to Morton; see Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

12. See Nalini Devanandan and MM Thomas (eds.), *Preparation For Dialogue*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1964, p. 118.

volume *Preparation for Dialogue*.¹³ He envisaged three necessary stages in dialogue, a study of the many varieties of modern Hinduism, a clarification of terminologies and a developing of Christian theology in the religious vocabulary of the Hindu. Such study, clarification and development were undertaken during the sixties and seventies by the CISRS movement on a considerable scale. As earlier noted, the process reached a climax in the year 1969, with the works of Robin H S Boyd (*An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*), Kaj Baago (*Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*) and MM Thomas (*The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*).¹⁴

M. M. Thomas – “Wider Ecumenism” and “Secular Dialogue”

M. M. Thomas was the logical successor to Devanandan in shaping inter-religious interaction. He saw the *koinonia* of the church not as “the Christian community in the narrow sense” but as “the whole human community...included in Christ,”¹⁵ a Christ-centred secular fellowship in which other religions and ideologies outside the church.¹⁶ This “wider ecumenism” and “open secularism” enables the Christian to participate with all humanity in nation building.¹⁷ Thomas then gave emphasis to the church’s mission in terms of participating in the struggle of humanity for social justice and a new humanity. The 1966 Church and Society study conference at Geneva, 1968 Uppsala WCC Fourth Assembly and 1973 Bangkok conference of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism were occasions when the ecumenical movement on the whole was taking the world situation seriously. The attempt to theologically interpret mission in terms of the “worldward journey of the Church” was at its height. Thomas was influential in shaping these trends as well as being shaped by these occasions.

He did not adequately spell out the meaning and implication of the inclusive theology that he alluded to in his expressions the “wider ecumenism,” “open secularism” and “Christ-centred secular fellowship in other religions and ideologies.” Thomas expressed definite Christ-centredness in his theological views, but did not approve of the other-worldly eschatological interpretations used by conservative Christians.

13. *Ibid.*

14. First two from Madras: CLS and the third from London: SCM.

15. MM Thomas, “Salvation and Development,” *Crucible*, 1974. Cf. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

16. See MM Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1971, pp. 13, 40.

17. MM Thomas, *Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1976. Cf. Morton, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

As outlined in his Carey Lectures at the United Theological College, he was more concerned with the after-effect of salvation (i.e., "salvation to what?") than with the question of "salvation for what?"¹⁸ Active participation in society became the key theme for all his theological understanding and expression. Under his leadership, CISRS went through a period of exploring the church's role in social action for social justice. Though it did have programmes of inter-religious studies and interactions, there was widespread dismay that the inter-religious dialogue programme did not progress sufficiently. In our critical evaluation of the work of CISRS this was discussed. GR Karat and Godwin Shiri, the former and later secretaries of the Student Christian Movement of India, indicated in 1969 and 1980 that the "work of the CISRS in the field of religion has been less vigorous since the passing away of Dr. Devanandan" and that "CISRS needs to give more attention to the task of rethinking and redefining theological concepts in terms which will be intelligible within the Indian religious context."¹⁹ As the CISRS self-study report of 1973 made mention, Devanandan's vision of a solid and significant link with the non-Christian community was not achieved.²⁰ Thomas himself recognised this failure to develop a theology of religious pluralism, and attempted it as late as in 1987 in his *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake*.²¹

The Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies aimed at articulating the task of Christian mission in an Islamic context.²² A similar institute proposed for the Study of Hinduism did not materialise until CISRS was formed in 1957, and that again did not meet the need for inter-religious interaction. Though a certain amount of work was undertaken within the CISRS, NCCI, Board of Theological Education and Senate of Serampore

18. See this issue discussed in the collection of Thomas' Carey Lectures, *Salvation and Humanisation*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1971.

19. See GR Karat, "One Man's Thought on C.I.S.R.S.," *NCCR*, LXXXIX:8, August 1969, pp. 253-255; and Godwin Shiri, *Christian Social Thought in India, 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982, p. 193.

20. See Hunter p. Mabry, "The CISRS Today: Preliminary Report on a Self-Study," *CISRS Report for 1974-75*, p. 29.

21. MM Thomas acknowledged the need to develop a theology of religious pluralism in his book *Men and the Universe of Faiths* (Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1975), and attempted such an ecumenical theology of pluralism in his *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake*, *op. cit.*, pp. 122.

22. See Henry Martyn Institute publications. Cf. Dwight Baker, "Accessions to Islam in India," Samuel Bhajjan, "The Christian Churches and Islam in the Indian Context"; and the report on "Mission and Dialogue in Local Congregation" in *The Bulletin of Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, IX:1-2, January-June 1986, pp. 1-20, 54-75 and 82-88.

College structures to facilitate the study of religions and to interpret the task of Christian mission within the religiously plural setting in India, the church at large and the laymen in the pew were not keen to follow this trend of dialogue. M Azariah clarifies the reason:

But such approaches of witnessing to the Gospel of Christ, by their very nature, will be limited in their scope involving only those well-informed of the tenets of these religions and the philosophical moorings of these faiths. Only the elitist, the educated and the sophisticated intellectuals whether from Christian faith or other faiths can engage in any meaningful or creative "dialogue" between them. But the vast majority of common people in our land with only 36.7% literacy rate, even most of them quite ignorant of their own faith, will have to be enabled to encounter Christ on their own level and contexts, and on their own terms and conditions, if the Indian Church would authentically want to witness to them.²³

Ecumenical Developments under the World Council of Churches

Emphasis on dialogue grew within the ecumenical movement, and the centre of gravity for dialogue shifted to Geneva in the seventies. Within the ecumenical movement the desire to understand other religions and their scriptures and the impetus to develop a relevant Christian approach in mission and evangelism to other religious people was already found from the first World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. Commission IV on "The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions" collected reports from a wide variety of people on their work and approach in evangelism.²⁴ Jerusalem 1928 and Tambaram 1938 International Missionary Council Meetings dealt at length with the Christian approach to other religions and to secularism. They played a major role in the evolution of the main trends in the theology of religions within Protestant missionary circles, and eventually in the modern ecumenical movement as expressed in the World Council of Churches.²⁵

The traditions set in India by JN Farquhar, TE Slater, Rufus Jones, and AG Hogg, and the neo-orthodox impact of Karl Barth, Hendrik Kraemer and Emil Brunner, were to affect the missionary theology of religions to a large extent. There are several studies done by Western

23. See M Azariah, *Witnessing in India Today*, Madras: Diocesan Press for UELCI, 1983, p. 17.

24. See D S Cairn's unpublished collection of transcripts of the Commission IV of the WMC, Edinburgh 1910, volume III: India, held at the archives and special collections of the University of Aberdeen library.

25. See M M Thomas, *Risking Christ*, op. cit., p. 45.

and Eastern scholars on these developments, including MM Thomas' *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake: Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Pluralism*.²⁶ Stephen Neill's *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions*,²⁷ James Leland Cox's doctoral thesis on "The Development of AG Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith: Its Significance for the Tambaram Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1938"²⁸ and Wesley Ariarajah's doctoral thesis "The Implications of Recent Ecumenical Thought for the Christian-Hindu Relationship"²⁹ are other examples of such studies. Whereas the ecumenical movement entered into systematic debate on the question of setting up a sub-unit for dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies, the conservative sector of the Protestant churches, their institutions and faith mission societies parted company, since they felt they could not debate what were conclusively the absolutes of their faith. We shall trace their separation, particularly as it relates to India, in the next chapter. This thesis does not summarise ecumenical developments in the theology of religions since that is already available from the many publications of the dialogue sub-unit of the World Council of Churches. The "Annotated Bibliography for Inter-Faith Dialogue" by John Berthrong and the "Seventeen Promises..." by AJ van der Bent and his several bibliographical summaries in issues of *Current Dialogue* supply us with a reading list and gist of ecumenical developments.³⁰ The shift of Geneva still had bearing on India, since the worldwide church looked to India where one found fertile grounds for inter-faith dialogue.

Stanley J. Samartha – "Dialogue in Community"

It fell on the hands of Stanley Samartha to steer the dialogue programme of the ecumenical movement as the first director of the new unit on interfaith dialogue that was set up by the World Council of Churches. As one who was a principal of Serampore College and Karnataka Theological College and a professor of religions at the United Theological College, Samartha has had profound influence within the Indian theological community in its theological development, and carried this influence into the wider world setting through the WCC unit on dialogue, providing leadership and a third-world perspective at several consultations of the unit while also editing the reports. Such consultations and reports formed

26. *Ibid.*

27. Oxford, London, New York: OUP, 1961, 1970 (second edition), pp. 245.

28. Ph. D. thesis at the University of Aberdeen, 1977.

29. Ph. D. thesis at the University of London, 1987.

30. See *Current Dialogue*, 15 December 1988, pp. 40ff and 33ff.

a new corpus of literature to arouse relevant interest in the process of interfaith dialogue in a world which was experiencing the effects of religious pluralism as never before. *Dialogue Between Men of Living Faiths, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Living Faiths and Ultimate Goals, Faith in the Midst of Faiths* and numerous articles and reports represent the development of thought through the decade of Samartha's leadership. Some of his articles were compiled in his *Courage for Dialogue: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-religious Relationships*;³¹ and all his contributions are listed in the collection of essays *Dialogue in Community*³² edited in his honour by C D Jathanna. Samartha attempted to develop a Christology for India in his book *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*.³² His thought and contribution is summarised in Wesley Ariarajah's article "Some Glimpses into the Theology of Dr. Stanley Samartha."³³

Samartha was critical of the old (imperial) theology of mission as "very largely shaped in the colonial era, with its Europe dominated history, church-centred theology, and unexamined assumptions of Western superiority in race, culture and religion;" and disagreed with the use of "terms such as 'evangelistic campaign,' 'missionary strategy,' 'campaign of crusade,' 'occupying non-Christian areas,' 'sending reinforcements' and the like," saying they "sound more appropriate to military enterprise than to Christian witness to God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ."³⁴ He saw no possibility of reconstructing or renovating the old concept of mission by "pouring theological cement into ecclesiastical fissures of the old building." He did not propose to give up mission, as he held that the justification for the existence of the church is in her sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, and to give up mission would be "to spill out the oil from the lamp of Christianity." But a unilateral proclamation of a "uniquely saving truth," he feared would sound arrogant in the ears of non-Christian hearers. Hence, refusing to limit God's mission to the church's mission, and believing in the need to rethink the theology and

31. Constantine D Jathanna (ed.), *Dialogue in Community: Essays in Honour of Stanley J Samartha*, Mangalore: KATHRI (Karnataka Theological Research Institute), 1982.

32. Madras: CLS, 1974.

33. Wesley Ariarajah in C D Jathanna (ed.), *Dialogue in Community*, op. cit. pp 225-246.

34. See SJ Samartha, "Partners in Community: Some Reflections on Hindu-Christian Relations Today," *Occasional Bulletin*, 4:2, April 1980, p. 80; and Ariarajah, "Some Glimpses. . .," op. cit., p. 235.

practice of mission in the total context of human history,³⁵ Samartha began to see God at work in the wider world, as did his Indian predecessors Devanandan and Thomas. In spite of the resistance and unwillingness that he found in the churches to even discuss the possibility of salvation outside the church, he took biblical examples to show the possibility and reasoned that

When our Lord did not hesitate to acknowledge faith outside Israel, why should his followers be so markedly cautious about it? At a time when the quest for salvation has become universal, and when the people the world over are engaged in the common task of rebuilding society and strengthening its foundations, the Church must be willing to recognise and welcome God's work of salvation in areas unfamiliar to her.³⁶

Further, he said that "One cannot limit the extent or the mode of God's redeeming work, because it is as universal as his love which embraces all humankind at all times." And hence he wished for the church to recognise God's saving work in "areas outside the hedges of the Church."³⁷ This naturally raises the question of the place of Jesus Christ in the salvation of mankind. To Samartha, "to conquer other religions" does not provide the way to establish the Lordship of Christ.³⁸ While he saw no problem in asserting the Lordship of Christ as a joyful witness to the power of the cross and the resurrection, he bewailed the untold harm of its distortion towards the relationship of the Christian to his neighbours of other faiths. He identified the root of the problem as the tendency to regard Jesus Christ as "the Christian's God" with a sort of "Christomonism."³⁹ Without ignoring the divinity of Jesus Christ, he emphasised the fact that God is supreme and that Jesus Christ himself "will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone," and proposed several attitude changes as necessary within the church's understanding and portrayal of Jesus Christ and his Lordship.⁴⁰

35. Cf. Samartha, "Religious Pluralism and the Quest for Human Community," in Robert Nelson (ed.), *No Man is Alien: Essay on the Unity of Mankind*, Leiden: EJ Brill, pp. 143 f.

36. Cf. Samartha's article "The Quest for Salvation and Dialogue between Religions," p. 432.

37. *Ibid.*

38. See Samartha's discussion of this view in his article "The Lordship of Christ and Religious Pluralism" in GH Anderson and TF Stransky (eds.), *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980.

39. *Ibid.*

40. See Wesley Ariarajah's discussion of Samartha's views, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-242.

For the church's mission, the question is how to present the particularity and the universality of Jesus Christ, and how to relate the particularities of various faiths without the element of rejection. To understand universality as the extension of one particularity would mean the conquest of all other particularities by the one. To Christian mission it would mean the extension of Christianity and the extinction of all other religions. Samartha evaluated this as "neither desirable nor possible." To understand all particularities as equally valid and to demand that no particularity should claim universality would pose the danger of "either a sterile co-existence or an unseemly competition." Hence Samartha opted to hold "God alone as the absolute" and "all religions to be relative." He argued against warranted fears about relativism and established the possibility of a relativism which does not necessarily undercut commitment. He did not perceive commitment as "a self-imposed obligation to defend their particular community of faith over against the others," and saw relativisation of religions as freeing people of all faiths to perceive the ultimacy of God who holds all things and all people in his embrace.⁴¹ He claimed that

a particular religion can claim to be decisive for some people or some people can claim that a particular religion is decisive for them, but no religion is justified in claiming that it is decisive for all.⁴²

He did not consider all religions as equally true but as having distinctive differences in their perception of and response to the ultimate truth. Hence there was need for dialogue among them to enrich each other. Samartha called for "a whole new way of understanding the theological task," to speak in inclusive ways so that it recovers the true meaning of the *oikumene* and makes sense to the calling of the church to live in the midst of pluralism. To sum up, he said that

What we need today is a theology that is not less but more true to God by being generous and open, a theology not less but more loving toward the neighbour by being friendly and willing to listen, a theology that does not separate us from our fellow human beings but supports us in our common struggles and hopes. As we live together with our neighbours, what we need today is a theology that refuses to be impregnable, but which, in the spirit of Christ, is

41. Cf. Samartha's "Ganga and Galilee: Two Responses to Truth," in John Hick (ed.), *Diversities of Religious Experience* and "The Lordship of Christ and Religious Pluralism," *op. cit.*

42. See "Ganga and Galilee," *op. cit.*

both ready and willing to be vulnerable.⁴³

Samartha's theology is a product of his own age and background, as he says every theology and all theological perceptions are. His theological method was primarily raising questions which point towards theological rethinking, so urgently needed to live in a pluralistic world. Ariarajah affirms that Samartha has contributed a great deal to the "silent theological revolution"⁴⁴ that has been taking place as a result of the ministry of dialogue. Whereas this revolution took place from Geneva, the Indian scene followed along with less glamour, as interfaith interaction was an everyday affair.

J. Russell Chandran, Herbert Jai Singh and Others

Russell Chandran identified dialogue between the church and people of other faiths as the most promising source for a vigorous Indian Christian theology, but noted that at the end of the sixties "Only a small beginning has been made towards the development of a creative dialogue in India."⁴⁵

Devanandan pioneered but, as MM Thomas said, the breakthrough was yet to come. The Roman Catholics have done more than Protestant theologians in contributing to this inter-religious understanding. Abhishiktananda, Raymond Panikkar, Jacques-Albert Cottat, Father De Smet of Poona, I Vempeny, JB Chethimattam and many others could be studied for the understanding of the Catholic contribution to interfaith dialogue, but they lie outside the focus of this book.⁴⁶

43. Samartha, "The Holy Spirit and People of Various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies," in Dow Kirkpatrick (ed.), *The Holy Spirit*, Tennessee: Tidings, 1974, p. 38. Cf. Horst Burkler, "The Debate of the 'Cosmic Christ' as Example of an Ecumenically Oriented Theology," in H. Burkler and WMW Roth (eds.), *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debates*, Lucknow, Delhi, Madras: LPH, ISPCK, CLS, 1972, pp. 198-214.

44. Wesley Ariarajah, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

45. See J R Chandran, "The Theological Task of the Church in India" in H Burkler and WMW Roth (eds.), *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debate*, Lucknow, Delhi, Madras: LPH, ISPCK, CLS, 1972, p. 121.

46. Some of the Roman Catholics who are noteworthy in the Indian development of interfaith dialogue and their works include Abhishiktananda, *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point Within the Cave of the Heart*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1968; *Saccidananda: A Christian Approach to Advaitic Experience*, Delhi, 1974; *The Further Shore: Sannyasa and the Upanishads, An Introduction*, Delhi, 1975; "Christians Meditate on the Upanishads," *Logos*, 6, 1965, pp. 1-16; "Indianizing Worship: A Study of Hindu Symbolism," *Word and Worship*, 1, 1968, pp. 298-307; "An Approach to Hindu Spirituality," *The Clergy Review*, 54, 1969, pp. 163-174; "Hindu Scriptures and Christian Worship," *Word and Worship*, 6, 1973, pp. 187-195, 243, 253; "The Upanishads and the Advaitic Experience," *CM*, 38,

Chandran affirms the work of Mark Sundar Rao as a beginning of a new type of literature for interfaith dialogue. He wrote *Ananyatva*,⁴⁷ a book interpreting Christian experience of God in terms of Christian non-dualism, taking the basic Christian concepts relating to the person of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the trinity and expressing them in the language of Advaita. Several studies were undertaken by the CISRS group of thinkers, such as Nirmal Minz's *Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu-Christian Dialogue* and *Inter-Religious Dialogue* edited by Herbert Jai Singh. But, as said earlier, even by 1980 the situation had not improved a great deal.

Herbert Jai Singh, unlike the others, in "Toward a Relevant Gospel in India," declared that he expected genuine conversions as a real possibility out of dialogue.⁴⁸ For many in the National Christian Council of India, the motivation for dialogue lay in the demand of the context. As the report of a CISRS biennial consultation on "The Household of God in a Pluralistic Situation" said,

The world "outside" is also concerned with the breaking down of barriers and in that process, if the Church, instead of being ahead

1974, pp. 474-487; "Yoga and Christian Prayer," *CM*, 35, 1975, pp. 472-487. Bede Griffiths, *Christian Ashram: Essays Towards a Hindu-Christian Dialogue*, London, 1966; "The Dialogue with Hinduism," *CM*, 7, 1964, pp. 144-149; "Further Towards a Hindu-Christian Dialogue", *CM*, 32, 1968, pp. 213-220; Raymond Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964, revised 1981; *The Trinity and World Religions*, Madras: CLS, 1973; "Common Grounds for Christian Non-Christian Collaboration," *RS*, V:1; "Essays on Christ as a Philosophic Problem," *RS* VI:3; "The Internal Dialogue: Raymond Panikkar's Theology of Religions" (by Dankfried Reetz), *RS* XV:3; Ishanarayana Vempeny, *Inspiration in the Non-Biblical Scriptures*, Bangalore, 1973; "An Approach to the Problem of Inspiration in Non-Biblical Scriptures" in G. Amalorpavadass (ed.), *Report of Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures*, Bangalore, 1975, pp. 153-178. John B Chethimattam, *Unique and Universal: An Introduction to Indian Theology*, Bangalore, 1972; "Man's Dialogical Nature and the Dialogue of Religions," in *Journal of Dharma*, 1, 1975, pp. 10-29; Nambiaparampil, "Dialogue in India: An Analysis of the Situation, a Reflection on the Experience," *Journal of Dharma*, 1, 1976, pp. 267-283; T. M. Manickam, "Man's Vision of the Hindu Dharma," *Journal of Dharma*, 1, 1975, pp. 101-117. For further literature see the bibliography in Antony Mookenthottam, *Indian Theological Tendencies: Approaches and Problems for Further Research Seen in the Works of Some Leading Indian Theologians*, Berne: Peter Lang, 1978.

47. Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1964. MS Rao was a convert from Hinduism.

48. See Herbert Jai Singh, "Toward a Relevant Gospel in India," *Indian Voice*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-140.

of the world in this movement, is behind, it would be condemning itself.⁴⁹

They saw Christian participation in the social and political movements as a way forward in such inter-religious dialogue.

Arvind Nirmal – "Religious Pluralism as a Gift of the Ultimate Reality"

Arvind Nirmal took the theological basis of interfaith dialogue a step further when he wrote his paper "Some Theological Issues Connected with Inter-Faith Dialogue."⁵⁰ He saw the multiplicity of the world religions as a reflection of the plurality within the Godhead. To Nirmal "the nature and structure of the Ultimate Reality is kaleidoscopic" and hence he proposed that

...we must take the problem of religious pluralism as the problem of the Ultimate Reality itself....that the Ultimate Reality has rich diversity within itself; that the Ultimate Reality is itself inexhaustibly rich and plural within its own being is the implication of religious pluralism. Religious pluralism implies that the Ultimate Reality is indeterminate and capable of innumerable manifestations. Different world religions then are Ultimate Reality's "economic gifts" to mankind.⁵¹

The popular Christian concepts being inadequate, he attempts a reinterpretation of the very concept of God, for which he drew inspiration from none less than the neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth, whom he described as "the one Christian theologian who had begun to grasp the inexhaustibly rich diversity within the being of God."⁵² Nirmal saw Barth as having changed his views as he grew in his understanding, and admired Barth's "willingness to change his theological thinking when it becomes necessary to do so."⁵³ He blamed the older generation of Indian Christian theologians like PD Devanandan, JR Chandran, SK Kulendran and MM Thomas as "still stuck with the insights of the early Barth filtered through Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*...especially...with Kraemer's phrase 'Biblical Realism,'" and evaluated Thomas as functioning within the conceptual framework provided by the early Barth.⁵⁴ Disagreeing with Thomas' view expressed in *Man and the Universe of Faiths*, Nirmal wrote that

49. See the report in *RS*, XVII:1, March 1970, pp. 88-90.

50. See *BTF*, XII:2, 1980, pp. 107-129.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 122f.

Any talk of a "radical revitalization of all religions" tends to undermine religions. It seems to me while Thomas is busy working out a theology of religions in terms of their "radical relativization" and a theology of salvation of men and women in terms of their humanization, the later Barth in his own way was trying to "relativize" and "humanize" his earlier one-sided concept of God as "Wholly Other."⁵⁵

Taking the later insights of Barth as more useful for dealing with the problem of religious pluralism, Nirmal concludes that "the living religions 'co-respond' (respond together) to the rich diversity and inexhaustible pluralism within the nature and structure of the Ultimate Reality." The purpose of inter-faith dialogue is explained by Nirmal:

...[the Ultimate Reality] adjusts itself "economically" and "savingly" to different situations and contexts. Such adjustments launch the living religions on a never ending voyage of seeking to understand the kaleidoscopic nature of the Reality and give them their dynamic character. At the level of their respective theologies, they are also heuristic. In inter-theological dialogue, the living religions starting from their particular theologies, search for a meta-theology and share in meta-theological concerns.⁵⁶

This meta-theology does not include preselytization, or what Nirmal terms "floor-crossing."⁵⁷ Conversion to him is part of the colonial package where empire building and church growth went together. Christian mission in the post-colonial age, like secular political missions, should respect the religious integrity and faith-commitment of people of other faiths, and through inter-religious dialogue facilitate the sharing and enriching of religious insights; Christianity needs to be self-critical and open to criticism by others; it has not only to give but also to receive from others. Hence according to Nirmal,

The main purpose of theology is to undertake an exploratory and heuristic search into the nature and structure of the Ultimate Reality...in order to orient and transform and live our lives in the light of our understanding of the structure and nature of the Ultimate Reality. Inter-religious dialogue, therefore, should lead us to a transforming vision. Such a transforming vision is Christian Mission.⁵⁸

Nirmal himself acknowledges that his act of calling Karl Barth to support

55. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

his "argument for the acceptance of religious pluralism as God's gift, gracious gift, to humans" may cause him to "probably roll uneasily in his grave."⁵⁹ Perhaps the same could be said of his transforming vision and ecumenical theology of Christian mission.

Christopher Duraisingh – "A New Point of Departure"

Earlier a teacher and director of the dialogue centre at the United Theological College, Bangalore, later the first non-Western general secretary of the Council for World Mission, London, and then the secretary of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of WCC, Geneva, Christopher Duraisingh agrees with Choan Sen Song that "For many of us Christians in Asia, it would appear that the perimeter of missiology has broadened and the plot for dialogue has thickened."⁶⁰ Since two-thirds of the world's people were non-Christian and thus disclaimed by the old (imperial) theology of mission, Song thought that Asian theologians "must decline the use of theological power to systematize two thirds of the world population out of direct relationship with God...."⁶¹ Duraisingh reiterates Song's call to his fellow Asian theologians to venture into a "radical rethinking of the mission of the church in the light of the mission-claims and practice of other faiths." He found the very fact significant, that the two sub-units of the World Council of Churches, one concerned with Mission and Evangelism and the other concerned with Dialogue, met together in January 1988 at Tambaram, fifty years after the famous 1938 conference at the same place, to jointly rethink mission, dialogue and their interrelation.⁶²

Duraisingh articulates "a new point of departure" for both mission and dialogue from the biblical literature. He relates the contrasting responses of Jeremiah and Hananiah to the same historical event of the exile in Babylon:

Hananiah's starting point is the unchanging theology of the Zion

59. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

60. Quoted in Christopher Duraisingh, "Issues in Mission and Dialogue: Some Reflections," *IRM*, LXXVIII: 307, July, p. 399, from C. S. Song's *Theology from the Womb of Asia*, London: SCM, 1985, p. 129.

61. *Ibid.*

62. The Madras Christian College at Tambaram, the venue where the famous 1938 IMC Conference met, called for a fiftieth anniversary celebration in conjunction with the World Council of Churches. The author was among the participants. Immediately afterwards the Dialogue and Mission sub-units met in a consultation on the interrelation between mission and dialogue. Papers and reports of the two programmes were published in *IRM*, July 1988.

tradition. It is in the light of that given formulation that the present is interpreted and hence Babylonians are declared as enemies of God and God's presence is exclusively identified with the temple and Jerusalem. Therefore, it is in the destruction of Jerusalem that the people of Israel find their salvation. But Jeremiah begins with an analysis of the present context, experience of the people in the present and then relates it to God's inclusive love to save at all cost. Therefore, he exhorts his people to pray for their captors, and asserts that in the peace of Babylon, his people will find their peace.⁶³

Similarly, there were contrasting views on topics in the New Testament expressed by the Pharisees on the one hand and Jesus on the other. God's acceptance of a Gentile Cornelius lay at the root of the new point of departure for the whole church, initiated by Peter in the early church. From these Duraisingh drew implications for the contemporary attitude that should motivate mission in terms of evangelism and dialogue.⁶⁴

Further, he takes the results of the study by the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in the sixties on *missio Dei*, and infers for contemporary understanding that

...if mission is God's then it is not exhausted by the mission of the church. God's mission may and does take place in many ways in the world. Neighbours of other faiths may also be agents of the *missio Dei*. If so, dialogue is essential in order to discern the focus and shape of God's mission in the world...both the mission of the church and interfaith dialogue must be seen as responses to the *missio Dei* and thereby, as arenas for the working of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

Also from the studies of the sixties he affirms that the order for our thinking is "God, World and Church" and not "God, Church and World". The distinction between MM Thomas' *koinonia* of the kingdom as "open fellowship" and "the church" is raised as crucial for mission and dialogue. With regard to the decisiveness of Christ, Duraisingh holds that the Christian affirmation of the universal availability of Christ does not necessitate any exclusive claim for its normativeness for outsiders, but that the Christian experience may as paradigm be witnessed to and shared by word and life. As a result, others may find the Christ paradigm to be an enrichment. He suggests that "conversion may follow." But his account is on the sharing by word and life; on Christian presence over against proclamation. He develops an appealing definition wherein

63. *Ibid.* p. 403.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 405.

...witness and dialogue are neither identical nor mutually exclusive acts...in interfaith encounters, genuine witness is dialogical and true dialogue includes witness. But, here, witness is not understood as a technique to "convince" someone else about the truth of what is being said, but rather an event in which one opens oneself to the reality of God before another so that that which is witnessed to encounters both the partners.⁶⁶

What is aimed at is the common human community willed by God. Christian particularity is not seen as excluding other particularities but as opening up the possibility for the Christian to discover "God's universal grace and salvific purpose in and through other particularities in the light of Christ."⁶⁷

Inter-Faith Dialogue – Its Effect on Theological Education in India

The trend expressed in these theologians has had two definite effects. On the one hand, it has influenced ministers and ministerial students in their attitudes towards the majority Hindu and Muslim community in India, and aroused a commitment to work in co-operation with them for the betterment of life for all in the Indian setting. It has helped to shape the social witness of the church within a religiously plural setting. With regard to the effect of interfaith dialogue on the ministerial formation of the church in India, we cannot but note that thus far it has had minimal effect, as the same old style of courses on Hinduism, Islam, primal religions and the evangelistic approach to them were taught in theological colleges and Bible schools. In the seventies there was the addition of a course in "Modern Religious and Secular Movements in India" as a compulsory Serampore subject.⁶⁸ Dialogue departments and programmes were opened in some of the colleges such as the United Theological College, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Gurukul Theological College, etc. Less developed experiments were undertaken by others like the South India Biblical Seminary.⁶⁹

66. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

68. See the B.Th., and B.D. course syllabi of the Senate of Serampore College for details on this and the other courses.

69. We make references to these in later chapters when dealing with these colleges and their programmes. One criticism here that we cannot fail to make would be the unavailability of teachers to teach in the field of religion in the Serampore colleges. It is a paradox that the United Theological College had to close its M. Th. programme in religions for the academic year 1989-90 for want of teachers. Foreign teachers who taught have retired and national teachers have found teaching positions in Western universities. Replacements are not

In 1980 Nirmal suggested possible elements of a curriculum revision in the context of inter-religious dialogue.⁷⁰ In the study of the Bible, to take note of the inter-religious dialogue that shaped the Bible itself and develop a "religious criticism" of the Bible;⁷¹ in the study of Christian theology, to develop a Christian theology which is in dialogue with other religions, ideologies and other academic disciplines; in the study of church history to begin to study the history of Christianity as a social history, probing into the motivational factors that caused the conversions and developments in a dialogical manner;⁷² and in the study of Christian ministry, to take note of the liturgical and worship elements in other religions, and developments in psychology, yoga and meditation for counselling in Indian situations.⁷³

The Programme for Theological Education and the Sub-unit on Dialogue, both departments of the World Council of Churches, organised a consultation for theological educators to discuss the implications of inter-faith dialogue for theological education.⁷⁴ Samuel Amirtham, Wesley Ariarajah, Thomas Thangaraj, Paul Rajshekhar, Christopher Duraisingh and TK Thomas participated in the discussions. They interpreted the role of the pastor in a multi-faith setting as beyond the Christian fold. The Western "parish" concept was seen as irrelevant to the Indian setting as people of several faiths lived within a town or city. The Christian minister was not the only religious guru or shepherd. And the Christian minister was not only to serve the Christian community, but all the people who lived in his "parish" area. Hence, ministerial formation takes note of the

found, and religiously plural India suffers for want of Christian teachers in religious departments.

70. Arvind Nirmal, "Some Theological Issues," *op. cit.*, pp.127-129.

71. Nirmal himself has attempted such a religious criticism in his article "A Theological Approach to the Question of Celebration of Some Indian Festivals by Christians in India," *BTF*, V, January-June 1973, pp. 31-42.

72. See Kaj Baago, "Recent Studies of Christianity in India," *RS*, XIV:4, December 1967 and Ian DL Clark, "'Church History' or 'History of the Church'?", *ICHR*, VIII:2, December 1974, pp. 91-110.

73. See John B Chethimattam, "Psychology and Personality in the Indian Tradition," *IES*, 7, 1967, pp. 101-117. Cf. Dayanand D Pitamber, "Some Possible Implications of Gandhi's Satyagraha for Pastoral Counselling in the Indian Context", *IJT*, 26:2, April-June 1977; EE James, "Guilt and Shame in Indian Culture with Special Reference to Pastoral Care," *TRACI Journal*, April 1978; Kambar Manickam, "Mental Health and Meditation", *RS*, XXVI:2, June 1979.

74. The consultation met in Malaysia in June 1985. See its report *Ministerial Formation in a Multi-faith Milieu: Implications of Interfaith Dialogue for Theological Education*, Geneva: WCC, 1986.

needs of the whole community. Amirtham and Ariarajah both agreed on this width of Christian ministry.⁷⁵ In the words of Thomas Thangaraj, there is a need for a new consciousness and a new model – moving from fact to imagination, from Christomonism to theocentrism, from singular to plural, from ecclesial community to human community and from communal piety to social justice.⁷⁶ Paul Rajashekar summarised the view:

The orientation of theological education ought to be one which enables students to *discover their ministry* in an interpretative way of living and ministering in the context of the "parish," and not one of training people for a predetermined ministry. A broadened understanding of pastoral ministry, extending to people of other faiths and no faith, might serve as a necessary corrective to the traditional provincialism in Christian ministry.⁷⁷

On the other hand, the implications of interfaith dialogue has driven conservative Christians into a reactionary mood with which they polarise and form parallel structures to further evangelistic missionary efforts in India. The purpose of dialogue is questioned among conservative Christians, who fear that it denies the need for men of other faiths to convert to Christian faith. Either by adopting Hindu priestly garments or by quoting Hindu scriptures, many attempt to relate to the Hindu environment, as we note in the case of Sadhu Chellappa and Acharya Daya Prakash.⁷⁸ Many converts use radio broadcasting as an effective means of communication to Hindus, such as Anand Chaudhri and RRK Murthy.⁷⁹ But

75. See Samuel Amirtham, "Introducing the Concern" and Wesley Ariarajah, "A Reflective Report" in *ibid.*, pp. 20–28 and 5–19.

76. M Thomas Thangaraj, "Teaching Theology in a Multifaith Context: A New Approach to Teaching Systematic Theology," *ibid.*, pp. 33f.

77. J. Paul Rajashekar, "Theological Education in Pluralistic Context: An Overall Assessment," *ibid.*, pp. 106–114. See p. 113.

78. Sadhu Chellappa attempts to interpret the Christian gospel by linking it to what exists as Hindu piety and practices from Dravidian culture. He has an effective evangelistic outreach among high caste Hindus. A Methodist minister, D. P. Titus, was the acharya of the Sat Tal Ashram in Nainital. He is known as Acharya Daya Prakash and often conducts *satsangs* in Stanley Jones' style.

79. Anand Chaudhry, the director of Rajasthan Bible Institute, has a radio programme "Aradhana" which is broadcast in the early morning hours when Hindu Brahmin women listen to the radio while tidying up their houses and have their morning devotional prayers. The programme attracts their attention as a religious broadcast, and as a result many have written for Bible correspondence courses. The author heard Chaudhry's account when he presented his radio evangelism as a case study at a consultation in Madras in February 1979. RRK Murthy is a Telugu radio evangelist whose programme similarly is effective.

the majority of evangelicals take to traditional evangelistic methods of preaching, tract distribution and personal evangelism. Dialogue takes place in the personal evangelistic setting, but never at the academic level. Evangelicals disown and distrust the ecumenical dialogue thinkers cited above as betraying the gospel of Jesus Christ. A non-academic and evangelistic concern expresses itself in all that evangelicals verbalise about the Christian relationship to other faiths. Vinay Samuel identifies the fear of syncretism and decline of evangelism as hindering evangelical participation in dialogue, and calls for new beginnings:

Just as evangelicals working in Latin America have brought the issue of social change to the fore, evangelicals from India in the context of the plurality of religions need to bring this issue of inter-religious dialogue to the fore. For in countries where the plurality of religions is dominant reality, social change on its own is an inadequate way of applying the gospel. The plurality of religions must also be addressed.⁸⁰

But Acharya Daya Prakash Titus has overtaken academic articulations by actual involvement as well as writing.⁸¹ A growth of this trend of openness to dialogue was noticeable among younger theological graduates in the eighties. From the TRACI setting, Vishal Mangalwadkar studied select gurus of India and wrote his volume *The World of Gurus* but after a time of work with the rural poor, his concern – like MM Thomas – turned to social reform as expressed in his *Truth and Social Reform*. Will all Indian evangelicals follow these trends? To what extent? Interfaith dialogue and social concern for nation building still continues as an ecumenical agenda for missions. Evangelicals continue to be characterised by their evangelistic efforts.

The significance of inter-faith dialogue for the mission of the church in a religiously plural setting such as in India is not only recognised by Vinay Samuel. He is gearing himself towards articulating an evangelical theology of inter-faith dialogue for the coming decades. Perhaps the new beginning will start with him and his colleagues. Such a new beginning will prove viable only if it can join hands with ecumenical attempts and provide an open forum without repeating old separatist trends.

80. Samuel and Sugden, "Dialogue with other Religions: An Evangelical View" in *The Gospel among our Hindu Neighbours*, Bangalore: AETEI, 1983, p. 191.

81. The Rev. D. P. Titus was Acharya of Sat Tal Ashram, founded by Stanley Jones. See his *Fulfilment of Vedic Quest in the Lord Jesus Christ*, 1982.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Significance of the Evangelical Fellowship of India

Protestant churches in India were direct results of the European and American colonial, commercial and missionary expansion during the post-reformation period, particularly the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What developed in India was a perfect imitation of the Western patterns, with minor alterations either proposed by a few bearers of Western Christianity or more often demanded by Indian converts.¹ Both the denominational disunity of Christians and the development of polarisation within Indian Protestantism had their precedents in Western Christianity. Hence our attempt to interpret the identity and mission theology of evangelicals in India must take us to consider their roots in the history of the evangelical and ecumenical divergence in Western Protestantism. This book can only accommodate a very brief account of that divergence, and anyone desiring a deeper knowledge may utilise the wide variety of literature available on the subject.²

Background and Identity of the Evangelical Movement

Evangelicalism³ is often "customarily seen as a contemporary

1. References are made to Lazarus, Lal Behari Day, Parani Andy, Sadhu Sundar Singh, Pandita Ramabai and a series of others who in different ways questioned Western patterns of theological understanding as well as polity and started new trends within Protestant churches. See for details Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969; "The First Independence Movement among Indian Christians," *ICHR*, 1:1, June 1967; Stephen Neill, *Builders of the Indian Church*, London: EHP, 1934; *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginning to 1707*, London 1983; Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969 and 1975.

2. We refer to the various literature in due course within this and following chapters. See the notes and Bibliography.

3. The author is indebted to Professor Andrew F Walls for the historical understanding that this section summarises. Earlier the author was introduced to the ecumenical and evangelical divide and its problems through the church history lectures of Dr. Kenneth Kinghorn at Asbury Theological Seminary, which

phenomenon," though the evangelical spirit manifested itself throughout church history.⁴ The term "evangelical" has been applied in a wider sense to the Protestant churches since the Reformation, by reason of the claim of the Protestant churches that they base their teaching pre-eminently on the gospel.⁵

The Protestant missionary movement sprang from the Evangelical Revival,⁶ which asserted the need for personal inner renewal among people already recognised as members of the church within states claimed to be Christian. A major characteristic feature of evangelicalism and the Evangelical Revival was the emphasis on "inward," "real" Christianity as opposed to "nominal" or "formal" Christianity. The inward experience led to witnessing as an expression. Local evangelism and worldwide mission were inevitable results of evangelical revival. Evangelicals claimed certain traditional doctrines were being neglected by "nominal" or "formal" sections in the church, but neither the Bible nor doctrinal confessions were an issue till the end of the nineteenth century. Though by the mid-nineteenth century missions were broadly supported by most churches, the evangelical influence in missions remained dominant.

Evangelicals applied "preaching the gospel" (evangelization) equally to seeking renewal among persons in a "Christian" society and to

aroused in him a desire to understand historical theology.

4. The evangelical spirit is identified in "the apostolic church, the fathers, early monasticism, the medieval reform movements (Cluniac, Cistercian, Franciscan and Dominican), preachers like Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter Waldo, John Hus, Savanarola." See R. V. Pierard, "Evangelicalism" in Walter A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964, pp. 379-382, especially p. 380.

5. The church created in Prussia in 1817 by the union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches was officially known as the "Evangelical Church (Evangelische Kirche)." All the Protestant churches of Germany were inclusively named "The Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands" in 1948.

6. The spiritual vigour of the Reformation was recovered again and again in the history of the church through different revival movements such as German Pietism, English Methodism and the Great Awakening, all rooted in the experience of noted leaders like Philip Jacob Spener and August Hermann Francke of Halle University, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf of the Moravian Mission from Herrnhut, Cotton Mather in Boston, Jonathan Edwards in Princeton, John Wesley and Charles Wesley in England, Hans Nielsen Haugen in Norway, William Carey and the missionary movement, George Whitefield, L. Moody and such. On the Evangelical Awakening, see the works of Edward Orr, particularly *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain*, 1949.

proclaiming the Christian faith where no such recognition was made. Most evangelicals made no formal distinction between the two processes.⁷

Since to evangelicals renewal at home took precedence over church order, and church order was the main source of division among European Christians, they were predisposed to "ecumenical" activities. On the mission field, the evangelization of the heathen likewise took precedence over church questions, and practical co-operation was necessary. "Missionary Councils" and later "Christian Councils" developed in many areas. We already took note of the National Missionary Council and National Christian Council in India. The most remarkable ecumenical development was the student missionary movement,⁸ which was international and directed to the evangelization of the non-Christian world. Its most notable outcome, the World Missionary Conference of 1910 (consisting of mission, not church, representatives)⁹ culminated ultimately in the International Missionary Council.¹⁰

Evangelicals generally continued to live within the structures of their churches, though sometimes, especially if they found the church authorities unfriendly, they formed their own internal organizations (e.g., voluntary societies).¹¹ There were radical separatist movements but they

7. The popular opinion is that work done among "nominal" members of the Churches is "evangelism" and work done among non-Christians is "mission."

8. Following the Second Great Awakening, the Student Voluntary Missionary Union developed under the influence of men like DL Moody. John R Mott's leadership in the later World Student Christian Federation was a parallel stream. Evangelization of the world in their generation was their passion, and their gatherings were precedents to the later World Missionary Conference. See William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth Century Background*, New York, 1952; Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill, *History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, London, 1954.

9. See the *Reports of the World Missionary Conference*, Edinburgh, 1910.

10. The IMC met at the Jerusalem (1928), Tambaram (1938), Whitby (1945), Willingen (1952), and Ghana (1958) conferences and merged into the WCC at its New Delhi Assembly (1961) as its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, which further held conferences at Mexico (1963), Bangkok (1972), Melbourne (1980) and Houston (1989). See the official reports of each of these above meetings published by the earlier IMC and the later WCC. See particularly *Minutes of the Assembly of the IMC*, November 17-18, 1961 and of the First Meeting of the Commission on the World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, December 7-8, 1961, New Delhi, Geneva: 1961.

11. For an interesting and informative analysis of the "Voluntary Society" see

were generally small.¹²

The Christians of the frontier and of the urban explosion in the US in the middle and later 19th century produced new churches effectively divorced from the European tradition, and tended to start church history over again by deducing a "New Testament pattern" direct from the Bible.

For older European evangelicals, conflict with others in the old churches tended to be on the nature of the church or the effect of the sacraments. Movements in the late 19th century – Biblical criticism, doctrinal reformulation, harmonization of science and theology – divided evangelicals. The division became particularly sharp in the USA, where churches split, often one part claiming to represent the "evangelical" faith in its "fundamentals" – now seen in attitudes to the Bible and doctrine. The newer American churches never entertained these new trends anyway, so a coalition of American forces emerged. In Europe, generally speaking, churches did not split, though the British student movement divided in the 1920s,¹⁴ and new inter-evangelical non-denominational

AF Walls, "Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church," *EQ*, 88:2, 1988. The title reveals Walls' positive acceptance of the societies of the Great Century. Compare arguments in favour of societies and parachurch movements of the twentieth century in American writings such as Ralph Winter, "Churches Need Missions Because Modalities Need Sodalities," *EMQ*, 7:4, 1977, pp. 193–200; Roger Hedlund, "Structures and Patterns of Third World Missions," in Hedlund and Hrangkhuma, *Indigenous Missions of India*, Madras: CGS, 1980, pp. 21–37.

12. This is illustrated by the largeness of the Lausanne movement compared with the International Christian Council of Carl McIntyre in the United States of America.

13. The America spirit of "liberty" was at the root of the incessant splitting of church denominations that would produce new churches on account of even minor difference. For example, the Methodist Church in the USA is broken into United Methodist, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Salvation Army, Nazarene, Pilgrim Holiness, Primitive Holiness, Christian and Missionary Alliance and Pentecostal groups. Each claim a commitment to scriptural holiness and biblical theological purity. Similarly, among the other major denominations – Presbyterians, Baptists and Pentecostals – we note the incessant formation of new churches.

14. This division of the student movement is seen in the separation between the Students Christian Movement on the one hand and the Inter-Collegiate Christian Union on the other. The ICCU links into the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students along with the American Inter-Varsity Fellowship and the Union of Evangelical Students of India. The tension between the two is illustrated in Lesslie Newbigin's own reflection on his college days at Cambridge in his biography *Unfinished Agenda*, London: SCM, 1985. See JC Pollock, *A Cambridge Movement*, London: John Murray, 1953; Geraint Fielder, *Lord of the Years*

organizations¹⁵ developed, both to encourage distinctive doctrinal emphases and to promote evangelization in the double sense, inside and outside church structures. In the USA, there developed an increasing definition of "true" faith in the light of new issues.

"Mission field" situations represented a mixture of types. Every Western group reproduced itself in India. Not only did they retain their names such as Irish Presbyterians in Gujarat and Scottish Original Seceders in the Central Provinces, but they imitated every least item. The newer American churches tended to desire a worldwide expansion of their new church and sent missionaries. This accounts for the multiplicity of denominations in spite of the growth in ecumenism in the twentieth century. Yet there was a cordiality attempted in relationships. Divisions usually were less severe than in West, but still were influenced by the West.

After the Second World War there was a dominant and widespread desire for international co-operation, reaction against war and a positive urge for post-war reconstruction. Co-operation was based on the old churches who were involved in the study processes following the World Missionary Conference of 1910, in the Faith and Order and Life and Work movements and the International Missionary Council, leading to the formation in 1948 of the World Council of Churches. The basis of co-operation was determined by "faith and order"- i.e., use of Bible, historic creeds, historic patterns of ministry - all rooted in European history. The later American tradition had never been part of this, and the separatist evangelicalism of the USA remained suspicious of all bodies which had not rallied to new definitions of the content of evangelical faith. The mid-twentieth century saw American evangelicals thus detached from, suspicious of and hostile to the World Council of Churches; and European evangelicals often cool (especially about stress on "order"), but still committed to their churches within the World Council.

By the end of the nineteenth century there was an acknowledged emergence of a "World Church" as a result of the missionary movement. The irrelevance of Western historical divisions and the history of missionary ecumenism encouraged the idea of new churches transcending denominations (e.g., the Church of South India), entirely different from the American new churches. The increasing sense of

Sixty Years of Student Witness, The Story of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, 1928-1988, Leicester: IVP, 1988.

15. This trend is illustrated by the Scripture Union, Children Special Service Mission, Youth for Christ, etc.

importance of "the church" and the Western connotations of missionary societies encouraged the merging of the IMC with the WCC in 1961. Younger churches in the Third World and the Western missionary statesmen who worked within the Third World setting were in favour of this merger. But this trend disturbed Europeans as well as American evangelicals – many evangelical missions had been in the IMC but had no basis in the WCC.¹⁶

Europe, exhausted by war, was open for large-scale evangelistic activity. By then it was only the USA that had the resources. US evangelicals began to develop missions to Europe, in addition to operating on a world scale for evangelism. This combined with the desire for larger groupings of evangelicals. But issues arose between the American "separatist" and European "internalist" types, particularly on the definition of evangelicalism (the American versions generally being more closely defined than European) and the motive (evangelization or producing alternative organization to the WCC). Already in the mid-twentieth century Dr. Billy Graham began to hold his crusades in European countries. American zeal tempered with the American spirit of liberty was on the upsurge, British colonial power was altering course and European nations were recuperating from the effects of war. With influence and economic power, world networks for mission and church relations began to develop for the second half of the twentieth century. The pattern was that of the Evangelical Alliance.¹⁷ In 1946 the centenary of the Alliance provided the occasion both to revive it as well as to organise a world network. The result was the World Evangelical Fellowship formed in 1951,¹⁸ with numerous national evangelical associations as members. The purpose was to preserve the purity of the evangelical faith, often articulated in concise statements of

16. The general secretary of the Church Missionary Society at the time, Max AC Warren, for instance, was one of the leading voices expressing disfavour of the merger of the IMC into the WCC. See his biography as well as his comments in the minutes of discussions on the merger cited in note 10 above. See Canon FW Dillistone, *The Missionary Theology of Max Warren*, London: CMS, 1978.

17. See JBA Kessler, Jr., *A Study of the Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain*; JA Arnold, "These Fifty Years: A Brief Epitome of the History of the Evangelical Alliance" in *Jubilee of the Evangelical Alliance: Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference held in London, June-July 1896*, (1897), pp. 43-64; JW Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship: A Centenary Tribute to the Life and Work of the World's Evangelical Alliance, 1846-1946*.

18. David Howard, *The Dream that Will Not Die*, Wheaton: WEF, 1988; *The Evangelicals: the Story of a Great Christian Movement*, with contributions by John Stott, Ed Dayton, Billy Graham, et al., with a commentary by J D Allan, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House and Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1989.

faith which had to be signed and adhered to by members.

Through the fifties and sixties this separate development of evangelicals critical of the ecumenical movement grew steadily, though there were many arguing the irrelevance of such a divide since the church ought never to be characterised as purely one or the other, but always both evangelical and ecumenical. We shall return to deal with this later. What we earlier described as the worldward journey of the ecumenical movement in the sixties and seventies drove the evangelicals to a reactionary enthusiasm to strategise evangelization through large scale gatherings at Wheaton, Berlin and Lausanne.¹⁹ American evangelist Billy Graham, British evangelical John Stott, Australian Jack Dain and a host of leaders from all sorts of backgrounds rallied together as the architects of a neo-evangelicalism in the Lausanne Movement.²⁰ It grew from evangelical commitment to the evangelization of non-Christian people groups. They remained certain of the uniqueness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the need for the conversion of people of other faiths and no faith to Jesus Christ, and the importance of the growth of the church as the arena of God's activity. "Dialogue" as ecumenical evangelism became a threat to evangelical evangelism.²¹ The place of

19. The leaders of American mission societies which were linked under two major structures, namely the Evangelical Foreign Missionary Association and the International Foreign Missionary Association, met together at Wheaton in 1966. This was a strategic conference in shaping the togetherness of evangelical Americans. An international development followed. The Berlin Congress on Evangelism brought together evangelicals from around the world to consider the "what" of evangelism in the same year. The International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne in 1974 considered the "how" of evangelization. See their reports for information; Harold Lindsell (ed.), *The Church's Worldwide Mission*, Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966; Carl FH Henry and Stanley Monneyham (eds.), *One Race, One Gospel, One Task* (2 volumes), Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1967; JD Douglas (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1975.

20. On the Lausanne Movement, see the follow up conferences around the world and at Pattaya, Thailand in 1980; the *Lausanne Occasional Papers*, the newsmagazines *World Evangelization* and *Lausanne Update*.

21. See critical works of evangelical authors who negatively evaluated the World Council of Churches; Arthur Johnston, *The Word of God and the Battle for World Evangelism*; Peter Beyerhaus, *Mission Which Way: Salvation or Humanization?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974; Bangkok '73: *Beginning or End of World Mission?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974; Harvey T Hoekstra, *Evangelism in Eclipse: World Mission and the World Council of Churches*, Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1979. For the evangelical and ecumenical divergence, see Norman Goodall, "Evangelicalism and the Ecumenical Movement," *ER*,

the Bible for faith and practice, particularly contextual hermeneutics, the relationship of religions to Christianity and the place of conversion, the debate between evangelistic priority and social involvement were all add catalytic fuel, widening the chasm of the unfortunate polarisation between evangelical and ecumenical sections of the church around the world. Indian evangelicals were influenced by these world developments. While some fell prey to partisanship, the historical churches on the whole tried to maintain a balance between evangelistic zeal and ecumenical fervour. Most educated Christians did not commit themselves to any of the Western viewpoints, but carved out their own ways, methods and understandings. To this we must now turn our attention.

The Evangelical Movement in India

In India evangelicals are found predominantly in the historical large Protestant churches,²² which themselves are active members of the World Council of Churches and the National Christian Council of India.²³ In the early decades of the twentieth century, their missionary zeal and passion for unity were concretised in the formation of the Indian Missionary Society (1903),²⁴ the National Missionary Society (1905),²⁵ the South India United

XV:4, July 1963; Eugene L Smith, "The Conservative Evangelicals and the World Council of Churches," *ER*, XV:2, January 1963; Roger C Bassham, *Missionary Theology 1948-1975: Years of Worldwide Creative Tension, Ecumenical Evangelical and Roman Catholic*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979.

22. Dr Ben I Wati, general secretary of the EFI for two decades, wrote, "at one time last century it could be said that the Church in India was largely evangelical. See his collections of articles and essays *Whither Evangelicals? The Evangelical Movement in India*, Bombay: GLS for EFI, 1975. Most of the efforts known as indigenous missionary work in India are led, staffed and supported by members of the historic churches such as the CSI, Mar Thoma and Methodist.

23. A parallel affirmation can be seen from Africa: "...we do recognise that there are elements of evangelical Christianity evident in ecumenical groups in Africa, for example in the AACC and the National Councils of Churches...." Byang H Kato, "Ecumenicals - Evangelicals: Debate in Germany" in *Perception*, April 1975, p.1.

24. The IMS was founded as the Tinnevely Anglican Diocesan Mission and gave birth to the Dornakal Diocese in Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Bishop VS Azariah. See his article in *HF*, January 1905, pp. 117ff.

25. The NMS was born on Christmas day 1905 at Serampore with founding members including KT Paul, VS Azariah and Sherwood Eddy. See DF Ebner, *The National Missionary Society of India, 1905-1942*, Chicago: 1944; cf. *HF*, XX, pp. 31ff and XXV, pp. 195-205.

Church (1908)²⁶ and in negotiations towards the United Church of North India.²⁷ Other evangelicals belong either to small denominations or to the Pentecostal streams. Most of the smaller denominations are products of the newer churches and their missions, a vast majority of them from America. Their umbilical cords uncut, they lack a voice of their own and exist as strictly guided and governed appendages of the Western missions.²⁸ A few are indigenous independent church groups such as the Subba Rao Movement in Andhra Pradesh²⁹ and the Bakht Singh movement.³⁰ Varieties of Charismatics and Pentecostals operate as separatist, self-contained units unrelated to other Christian groups, and often grow in number through the transfer of members from the larger churches in addition to converts from other faiths.³¹

Evangelicals within the mainline churches were actively involved in the National Missionary Council, later National Christian Council, co-operating in mission to Muslims, the Evangelistic Forward Movement (later Forward Movement in Evangelism), social services, rural education

26. Churches of the London Missionary Society (Congregational), American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland came together and formed the SIUC in 1908, which later joined with the Anglican and Methodist churches to form the CSI in 1947. See Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.

27. The United Church of North India followed the pattern of the CSI and formed the CNI in 1970. See Parker, *Development of the United Church of Northern India*; DM Kennedy, "The CNI History," *ICHR*, VI:2, 1972 and VII:1, 1973.

28. An example here could be that of the US-based Church of the Nazarene, which after nearly a century of mission work in India has about 6000 members in five districts governed by district superintendents, but still holds ordination as an importable commodity – the general superintendent from USA has to come to ordain the clergy in India!

29. See Kaj Baago, *The Movement Around Subba Rao*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1968.

30. Bakht Singh, a convert from Punjab, has organised a popular movement known as the Bakht Singh Fellowship. Disbelieving in theological education, their lay elders get trained within the fellowship in word and ministry and take up pastoral leadership, often supporting themselves through secular employment.

31. They are found in an ever-increasing number of groups, popular of which are the Indian Pentecostal Church, Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, Maranatha, Full Gospel Young Men's Association, Assemblies of God and other independent groups. Newbigin identifies conservative Evangelicals with the Pentecostal tradition, as McGlashan indicates in his "Ecumenical Movement and the Evangelicals," *NCCR*, September 1965, p. 371.

and reconstruction programmes, medical missions and relief work.³² They benefitted from the findings of NCC studies on "Christian Higher Education" by the Lindsay Commission, "Christian Mass Movement" by the Pickett Commission and the Ranson Report on "The Christian Minister in India."³³ Indian evangelicals continue to emphasise and practice biblical concepts of mission and evangelism from within the church in India, drawing inspiration and information from wider ecumenical developments, as well as from evangelical conferences and consultations.

Neither the evangelicals in the historical churches nor the evangelicals in the Pentecostal-Charismatic streams saw a need for a separate structure for evangelical fellowship. In the historical churches, the leadership attempted to hold evangelical and ecumenical understandings in creative tension. Men like JR Chandran held strong opinions against separating what were like two sides of the coin. Pentecostals remained busy in their "Jerusalem and Judea" with their teaching, preaching, healing crusades and "tarry sessions,"³⁴ where the essential experience of the Holy Spirit and the eschatological hope of Christ's return dominated their attention to the exclusion of a need for interdenominational church unity, councils and creeds. But evangelicals in smaller denominations followed the directives of their parent missions, when they felt the need for such a structuring of a fellowship. A sad tale of the development is that whereas Indian Christians were in leadership in the first two groups, the third was very much under the control of the few Western missionaries or their mission societies administratively, and very definitely financially.

The Evangelical Fellowship of India

As noted above, the National Association of Evangelicals in America³⁵ took the opportunity of the centenary of the British Evangelical Alliance in 1946 to negotiate the forming of an International Association of Evangelicals. Two of their representatives, Dr. Clyde W. Taylor and Dr. J. Elwyn Wright visited India in 1950 in the course of their world journey

32. See Baago's *History of the National Christian Council of India, 1914-1964*. Nagpur: NCCI, 1965.

33. These were already considered in Chapter 1 of this book.

34. Tarrying sessions became common in churches in the South Indian states. They are extended hours of prayer and praise, sometimes held as monthly all night prayer sessions. Bible teaching and preaching, sharing of testimonies, and intense prayer charged with emotional and loud singing are normal features. In certain cases there may be individual and corporate speaking in tongues in prayer sessions.

35. Since the earlier formed Evangelical Alliance of the USA (1867) was inactive, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed in 1943.

to encourage the formation of such an autonomous organisation in India.³⁶ Their meetings in Calcutta, Akola, Bombay and Allahabad between 22 November to 21 December brought together representatives of evangelical missions who decided to form an All India Fellowship of Evangelicals.³⁷ At the first meeting at the Yeotmal Bible School of the Free Methodists,³⁸ the policy and purpose of the Evangelical Fellowship of India were drawn up and the EFI was officially constituted. "We had a difficult period," recalled Jack Dain, the chairman of the meeting, whose "being English was regarded, not least by American missionaries, as an advantage."³⁹ Robert McMahon recounts that

When the constitution was developed by point, there was a move to exclude from membership of E.F.I. any whose missions or churches were linked to the National Christian Council or other "ecumenical" bodies. (The ecumenical movement itself had evangelical roots, for example in the Student Missionary Volunteer Movement closely linked with DL Moody; but even before the crucial 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, from which much else stems, there were misgivings about the drift of the movement. To some evangelicals, the answer was separation from the ecumenical movements; and to some, this included separation from other evangelicals who were in bodies linked with the ecumenical movements).⁴⁰

Dain, convinced against the wisdom of such an extreme separatist view, found help in Dr Everett L Cattell and a few others "speaking with real spiritual power" and "pleading that EFI be kept open to all convinced

36. Taylor was a missionary in Latin America and later executive secretary of the EFMA; Wright was executive secretary of the NAE.

37. See Robert J McMahon, *To God Be The Glory: An Account of the Evangelical Fellowship of India's First Twenty Years, 1951-1971*, Delhi: Masihi Sahitya Sanstha for EFI, 1970, pp. 1-12.

38. Dr Frank Kline, the Bible school principal, reports there were 63 present at the meeting.

39. Jack Dain was converted in Calcutta, served as a missionary in India in the Royal Indian Navy, was liaison officer at the India Office in London, later general secretary of the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship, overseas secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, Co-secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship, federal secretary of the Church Missionary Society in Australia and was co-chairman of the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne 1974; Cattell was a Friends missionary, elected first chairman of EFI and executive secretary in the early years. Later he was principal of Malone College, Canton, Ohio in USA.

40. McMahon, *ibid.*, p. 7.

evangelicals whatever their affiliations."⁴¹ The EFI "adopted a position of neutrality towards the ecumenical movement," "while fully appreciating the convictions of those who differed." The EFI policy reads, "It is understood that membership shall not adversely affect other affiliations which members may have." Dain thought that the group was "welded into a remarkable spiritual unity" in "response to a real moving of the Spirit." The purpose of the Evangelical Fellowship of India was stated as:

To provide fellowship among Evangelical Christians and be a means of unified action directed towards

- (1) Spiritual revival in the Church,
- (2) Active evangelism,
- (3) Effective witness to, and safeguard of, the evangelical faith in the Church in all of its agencies.⁴²

To these later was added the purpose of relief and development. Dr. Kline stated two important points, that the EFI "does not claim exclusive representation of all evangelical thinking in India" and that the EFI is not "desirous of duplicating functions well performed by the National Christian Council."⁴³ The EFI carried out numerous activities during the first twenty years.⁴⁴ A major act was that of creating unity in evangelical theological education through the organising of the Union Biblical Seminary at Yeotmal, in September 1953, bringing together numerous evangelical missions and church groups to develop higher level evangelical theological education to train pastors and parachurch workers for the many parachurch evangelistic agencies that started during the fifties. Union Biblical Seminary became a central factor in the development of the evangelical ministry and movement in India, and we shall consider its influence in detail later. The EFI organised the All India Christian Book Club in January 1953; the Evangelical Radio Fellowship of India in October 1957,⁴⁵ bringing together the Far East Broadcasting Associates, Back to

41. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

43. Cattell affirms this, quoting a later incident. When the NCC Committee on Theological Education set out to produce basic theological text books, the EFI faced the question of countering it with another set. The decision was made that "duplication of a whole set was unnecessary and a waste of resources...duplicate only when a particular book was unsatisfactory." See Cattell, "The EFI and the Ecumenical Movement," *NCCR*, January 1965, p. 10.

44. Information here comes both from McMahon's book, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-76, and from the author's own personal knowledge due to his association with the EFI during the seventies.

45. ERFI was short-lived, dissolved in August 1965.

the Bible Broadcasting Inc., Trans World Radio's Masihi Vandhana and other independent and denominational radio programme producers; the Evangelical Literature Fellowship of India in April 1954,⁴⁶ bringing together Christian literature producers such as the Evangelical Literature Service of Madras, Gospel Literature Service of Bombay, Masihi Sahitya Sanstha of Delhi, India Every Home Crusade, Operation Mobilization and others, for mutual edification and combined effort in meeting the need of education of the church.

EFI's concern for revival and evangelism led it to organise various organisations and programmes such as: a) the Council of Evangelists in July 1956;⁴⁷ b) the City Penetration Plan, enabling the churches and parachurch agencies to venture into city-wide evangelistic programmes;⁴⁸ c) National Prayer Assemblies to promote intercession for revival and other needs of the church and nation;⁴⁹ d) emphasis of revival and revival preaching through the use of the Council of Evangelists in churches. Other endeavours were the arranging of pastors' conferences to revive and revitalise pastors; publishing of the *Pastor's Bulletin* to help them in sermon preparation;⁵⁰ evangelism through open air preaching.⁵¹ The EFI held its annual conferences, as well as the All India Conferences on Evangelism, as a follow-up to further the impact of worldwide conferences on evangelism (initially Berlin 1966 and later Lausanne

46. ELFI continues to provide fellowship and sharing of expertise and resources through its triennial conferences.

47. Such a council included gifted preachers like Augustine Salins, KV Cherian, Paul Sudhakar, Victor Manogoram, Akbar Haqq and many others.

48. See *City Penetration Plan*, an EFI booklet explaining this method of evangelism. A Nazarene missionary, Bronell Greer, was secretary of the evangelism department of EFI, followed later by P. Sathkeerthi Rao.

49. The secretary for revival and evangelism organises the prayer assembly. The author attended one such at Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh, in 1981. The extended times of prayer along with people from all over the country is both therapeutic and dynamic for the self and the church. Prayer requests and praise reports are collected earlier and put together in a volume for use at the assembly and for wider use.

50. This monthly magazine is edited by the revival and evangelism secretary. Following Ben Wati and John Richard, Sathkeerthi Rao edited the *Pastors' Bulletin*. EFI also publishes *AIM*, its official organ which replaced the earlier *Evangelical Fellowship* (1953-1969) in January 1970.

51. Open Air Evangelism Inc., of Australia, linked with the EFI in India and sponsored the work of two evangelists, one in Kerala and another in Karnataka. The author supervised the work of Rajan Varghese in Karnataka on behalf of EFI to assist Sathkeerthi Rao.

1974),⁵² and sponsored evangelism festivals and celebrations with Bill Graham, Akbar Haqq and other specialists through which large-scale evangelization was promoted with the cooperation of the churches.

EFI's missionary concern was structured in 1954 as its "world vision movement, named later in 1957 as "Indian Evangelical Overseas Mission," sending the Varghese M. Kattapuram family as Indian missionaries to Kenya. In 1965 it was revitalised and named Indian Evangelical Mission.⁵³

Concern for Christian education led EFI to bring together Sunday Schools, Christian education, Vacation Bible Schools, youth and adult education programmes under its Christian Education Department (CEEFI), which through its triennial conferences and training programmes on national and regional levels trained Christian educators for the churches. CEEFI was started in January 1962, and grew through its state and regional vernacular programmes. It has produced literature for use in Sunday Schools, youth Fellowships, adult Bible studies and has helped in training the laity for leadership in the church's self-education.⁵⁴

EFI's theological concern led to the formation of its Evangelical Theological Commission (ETC) in September 1962, replaced later by the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS, which worked with close links to the Theological Research and Communication Institute (TRACI)).⁵⁵ But this theological wing never became an active structure. A later attempt in 1980 was to develop the EFI Theological Commission. After an initial vigour of conferences and publication of booklets,⁵⁶ the structure slowed

52. Both conference volumes were published by EFI; *Into the Seventies with Christ*, 1970 and *Go Forth and Tell: Christ Jesus Saviour, Lord and King*, 1977.

53. See McMahon, *op. cit.*, pp. 47f.

54. CEEFI has produced Sunday School, youth and adult Bible study books in many languages of India. It published a quarterly news bulletin from Hyderabad where the office was located.

55. Theological Research and Communication Institute (TRACI) was started by Bruce Nicholls of BMMF New Zealand, missionary teacher at Union Biblical Seminary. It later moved to Delhi. It published the *TRACI Journal*.

56. ETC was short-lived but published two volumes of *Biblical Foundations*. EFI-TC was formed in 1980 with Vinay K Samuel as chairman and the author as secretary. It published two booklets, John Richard's *Church and Social Responsibility* and Francis Sunderraj's *Christian Education in the Local Church* in 1981 and 1982. It held a consultation at Bangalore on the place of theological education for evangelical theology. Papers presented were published in *TRACI Journal*, 20, September 1981 (S. Arles "Problems Faced in Theological Education," Graham Houghton and P T Chandapilla, "Theological Education and the Christian Ministry: In Pursuit of Excellence," etc.).

down within half a decade.

In 1967, the concern for relief and development led EFI to set up the EFI Committee on Emergency Relief. Later the "emergency" was dropped and the committee became a commission in 1970. EFI Commission on Relief (EFICOR) runs EFICOR Education and Training Unit (EETU) to educate the church towards ministry to the poor and to train young graduates in community development.⁵⁷ The EFI Department of Communication was a later addition, attempting to work on concerns expressed by the All India Christian Communication Seminar of 1978.⁵⁸ Recognition of the place and importance of ministry to women led to the setting up of a Women's Department in 1982.⁵⁹ When the needs in Hindi speaking North India were raised by the few North Indian representatives on the executive committee, the decision to appoint a regional secretary of North India emerged in 1982.⁶⁰ This was also in keeping with what the EFI study commission proposed after the EFI self-study during 1979–1981.⁶¹

57. See articles on EFICOR in *AIM*, V:8, 1974; VI:10, 1975; VII:8, 1976; VIII:8, 1977; IX :8, 1978 and EFICOR's Occasional Publications *EFICOR*, *Mustard Seed*, *In Contact*. Captain A. Jethro (1971–72), HS Kadambavanam (1972–75), Lt. Col. M. R. Mathews (1975–85) and C. B. Samuel (1986–) have directed this work. The education unit is considered later in this book.

58. The All-India Christian Communication Seminar had a wide variety of papers and workshops; Anne Ediger, "The Spiritual Decision Process," TE Koshy, "The Christian Approach to Secular Mind," VK Samel, "Contextualization of the Gospel," Bruce Nicholls, "The Church, Media and Parachurch Organizations," Kathleen Nicholls, "Indigenous Media," C George, "Incorporation of New Believers," Carl Lawrence, "The Theology of Communication," Donald Smith, "Research," William Haney, "Research Tools," Lal Chuangliana, "Leadership Development" and many workshops on writing, films, slides, cassette tapes, printed page, gospel recordings, radio, folk media, etc. PC Muanthanga was the secretary for communications.

59. A lay woman (school teacher) who did theological education by extension, Mrs Juliet Thomas, was the first secretary. But due to interpersonal problems with other secretaries, she resigned her post and was replaced by a young seminary graduate, S Noronha, as secretary.

60. Solomon Bodhan of Jhansi, earlier a student at SIBS, staff of Training Evangelistic Leadership and Scripture Union, was the regional secretary. He was chosen by the Hindi Evangelical Fellowship and appointed by the EFI in 1982. The author was involved in this selection process.

61. The author served as the honorary secretary of the EFI study commission and attended the executive and other meetings for the period as observer. Later he became an executive member and secretary of the theological commission.

Through all these activities "EFI secured co-operation in many areas where resources would go much further working together than separately."⁶² Cattell noted that the idea was not new, as the National Christian Council had fostered co-operation for years. But the EFI brought some new angles. Many who would not co-operate with the NCC have co-operated under EFI. Cattell considered this "a major achievement, considering how "individualism" has been "one of the great blights on conservative evangelicalism,"⁶³ and he commented that to a large extent the principle of co-operation has been adhered to. Only two major areas continued to suffer obvious duplication, theological education and Sunday School literature. The first of these we shall consider further. Co-operation was not easy to come by among conservative evangelicals; Cattell testified that

No one knows better than those of us who have laboured for evangelical co-operation and unity how grave are the weaknesses and how deep are the sins that are covered by this label.⁶⁴

But the extreme separatist view from certain Western quarters⁶⁵ influenced some to desire an "authentic" evangelical structure parallel to the NCCI; and they formed the Federation of Evangelical Churches of India (FECI).⁶⁶

The Federation of Evangelical Churches of India

Jack Dain's conclusion was that spiritual unity was caused by the Holy Spirit among all evangelicals in the formation of the EFI in 1951. Either this conclusion was premature, or the Holy Spirit - the causative force of unity - was distanced in the evangelical movement towards the end of the sixties; the "position of neutrality towards the ecumenical movement" adopted by the EFI and accepted by all, began to find disfavour with those who wished for a more authentic evangelical structure as a counter structure to the NCCI.⁶⁷ They could not feel at home with the evangelicals from larger ecumenical churches. When evangelicals from all over the

62. Cattell, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

65. One such Western influence comes from Carl McIntyre of the USA, president of the International Council of Christian Churches. His followers in India formed the India Bible Christian Council. The split in the Mar Thoma Church and the formation of the St Thomas Evangelical Church was aided by this group.

66. There were separate sessions held during free afternoons at EFI conferences from 1968, by a faction within EFI. The author attended one such during the EFI conference at Voorhees College, Vellore in 1971.

67. See McMahon, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

nation gathered at the annual EFI conferences, an attempt was made to discuss the need for a representative structure for the "purely" evangelical churches. This was encouraged by Western missionaries of the so-called "purely" evangelical denominations whose home-bases were anti-ecumenical and anti-WCC for various reasons. Often the Indian leaders of such groups either were ignorant of the ecumenical movement and its history or were puppets in the hands of conservative Western missionaries and the mission societies which governed them. We cannot be blind to the financial underpinnings of the thirst for evangelical theological purity that they talked about. To many of them, it was the much-needed money and not doctrine that was the motivating factor of their separatist tendency. Receipt of funds from parent missions often depended on their willingness to remain anti-WCC and anti-ecumenical.⁶⁸

The move among those who desired a separate structure other than EFI was discussed at different EFI conferences and finally in 1973 the decision was made to form the Federation of the Evangelical Churches of India.⁶⁹ FECI was inaugurated on 3 November 1974, at Akola, with eight different church denominations joining as members.⁷⁰ The FECI has not grown sufficiently to contribute much of anything, but provided an umbrella structure for those who wanted one. Among its leaders were men like PT Chandapilla and Bruce J. Nicholls. Chandapilla had served as the general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Students of India, a parachurch ministry working among university students. He gave leadership to the emerging younger generation and influenced many into Christian ministry. Whereas he gave most of his life to parachurch ministry, he became towards the end of his career quite convinced of the centrality and importance of the local church, and took up the general secretaryship of the FECI and was ordained by the Saint Thomas Evangelical Church, a split from the Mar Thoma Church. By then he was at retirement age. Bruce Nicholls, a missionary from New Zealand to

68. The author was present at various meetings and discussions of theological educators and Christian workers, where he was often shocked by the way the smaller American denominational native and foreign representatives spoke, revealing their ignorance of the ecumenical churches and expressing their fear of losing support from their parent missions if they were to in any way link with the Serampore University.

69. The plea for a separate structure came from smaller mission and church groups working in Central and Northern India.

70. The author, while a student at Asbury Theological Seminary, USA, read the report of the formation of FECI in *AIM* and remembers the agony and disturbance he felt at this separatist tendency in a land where church union has progressed in exemplary ways.

India, taught at the Union Biblical Seminary during the sixties and developed the Theological Research and Communication Institute at New Delhi on the same lines as evangelical research and study centres in the West, such as Tyndale House, Cambridge. He gave leadership to the FECl and in the formation of the Delhi Bible Fellowship, an independent church ministry based at large hotels in Delhi, with no reference to the existing denominations and churches in Delhi. Much later, he settled in the outskirts of Delhi in a pastoral role with the Church of North India, a return into the church after having given leadership to small and sectarian developments in India. The changes and developments in both these men stand as both warnings and crucial examples for study.

The EFI continued to exert influence upon all the member churches of the FECl. But at the 1977 All India Conference on Mission and Evangelism at Devalali, Chandapilla stated in his strategy paper what appeared a pro local church attitude to the exclusion of parachurch ministries. He later wrote that

I sense there is a wind of change that is blowing in the midst of Indian Christians and Churches, particularly evangelicals,....since the Devalali Conference in January 1977. This change brings to focus the place and role of the local church into the priority thinking of the Christian leaders. It is becoming clear to many that all the Christian activities of evangelisation, mission or socio-economic involvement, which are not related to and extending from the local church, cannot effectively carry on and bring about meaningful results....⁷¹

Chandapilla's emphasis on the local church, almost to the point of discrediting parachurch ministries, was unacceptable to Dr. Ben Wati, the long-time secretary of the EFI. Wati disagreed with this trend in his confidential report to the EFI leaders' conference of September 1980.⁷² The EFI took the local church seriously, while yet affirming the role of the numerous parachurch ministries.⁷³ FECl and EFI have continued in a

71. See PT Chandapilla, *FECl Bulletin*, 8, July 1978, p. 2.

72. See Ben Wati, "Some Current Trends in the Church," an unpublished paper written for the EFI leaders' conference, September 1980, SCM House, Bangalore. Wati commended the earlier views expressed in Chandapilla's "Evangelicals Today and Tomorrow," *AIM*, January 1974, pp. 14f.

73. The 31st Annual Conference of EFI Bangalore met under the theme "The Nature and Mission of the Church," and papers were presented on this topic and small groups discussed the papers. The intended publication of these papers never was accomplished.

love-hate relationship through two decades, defining and redefining their views and roles. It was feared that FECl might cause its members to disassociate from EFI and the evangelicals in the historic churches.⁷⁴ But most of the FECl member churches were small, representing an insignificant minority in terms of numbers.⁷⁵ Their size protected them from such separatism, as they needed the strength of fellowship from the rest of the Christian church in India.

Theology of Mission Among Evangelicals

There is no need for us to develop a full account of the evangelical theology of mission. There is ample literature on the topic, and reference to some of this has already been made. Our concern here is to identify the salient features of Indian evangelical faith as distinguished from the views of those considered non-evangelicals.

The statement of faith of the Evangelical Fellowship of India reveals the way evangelicals in India expressed their faith. They were committed to the authority of the scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as the only inspired word of God, the lostness of mankind, the atoning death on the cross of Jesus Christ, the uniqueness of Jesus as the only saviour, the need for the preaching of the gospel to non-Christians with the intent to help them believe in Jesus Christ, convert and enter the church through baptism, the importance of the growth of the church as the body of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the believer, the mission of the church as evangelism, good works as and when necessary and the awaiting of the church for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some held the mission of the church as evangelism, but others acknowledged the place of social service as a second priority and as preparation for evangelism. With regard to the unity of Christians, structural, organic and conciliar unity was considered secondary compared to the spiritual unity already accomplished in Christ. The unity of mankind was understood as only possible within the church, which one entered through conversion and baptism. Non-Christians were considered lost and the question of how the eternal God of love will treat those who did walk in whatever light they received was left as beyond human assumptions. Dialogue was entertained only in as far as it helped

74. The author recalls that the EFI executive committee often discussed this fear of FECl separation during the meetings of 1980-82.

75. Wesleyan Church with its 800 members, Free Methodists with their 3000 and Nazarenes with their 6000, along with St. Thomas Evangelical Church of the South, were part of the FECl membership.

evangelism.⁷⁶ But, to most evangelicals, straightforward involvement in dialogue was a waste of time. Ecumenical Christians were seen as betraying the gospel when they talked of the wider ecumenism and of Christ outside the church. Theological pioneering hence was feared as endangering to the soul. Therefore evangelicals majored in defensive Christo-centric and church-centric theology rather than creative indigenous theology. Their emphasis on practical theology was governed by scriptural paradigms rather than contextual societal demands. Even where there was no conflict between the scriptural and contextual calls in mission, they tended to withdraw from active involvement in society. Social service and relief activity was accommodated within their mission activities, but anything that appeared political was pitched against the scriptural call to obey the authorities since they are set from above. Social ills and evils were often identified, but the solution always was in the proclamation and experience of salvation; never in picketing, boycott or revolution.⁷⁷

Because of its diversity, the evangelical movement inevitably was pushed towards setting up its own structures of theology, theological education, mission and ministry in post-independence India.

76. See John RW Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, Chapter Three on "Dialogue," Bombay: GLS, 1978; V Samuel and C Sugden, "Dialogue with other Religions – an Evangelical View," in *The Gospel among our Hindu Neighbours*, Bangalore: PIM Asia and AETEI, 1983, pp. 181–211; cf. Acharya Daya Prakash (Titus)'s views in his books.

77. This tendency could be perceived in the doctoral thesis of Sunand Sumithra in which he studied the theology of MM Thomas and entitled it *Revolution as Revelation*, implying that the two are antithetical.

PART THREE

Development of Ministry in the Indian Church

CHAPTER NINE

Developments in Evangelistic Missions and Ministries

The development of structures for mission and ministries by evangelicals took place both inside and outside the historic churches in India. Whereas they joined hands with all Christians to develop the structures of the church for mission, when faced with pressing needs on the one hand and rigid ecclesiastical authorities on the other, they also lent their support and time to developments outside the church. Inevitable parachurch structures have developed thus to cater to needs in mission.

Denominational Missions

Churches in India have developed their denominational mission structures. The first major indigenous structure to facilitate evangelistic and missionary propagation of the Christian faith in India developed in the reformed Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Kerala, on 5 September 1888.¹ A century later the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association had over 150 mission stations within Kerala and 31 outside with ashrams, hospitals, educational centres and destitute homes.² Vedanayakam Samuel Azariah, the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church and a group of eight clergymen and twenty laymen formed a prayer fellowship in Palayamkottai, on 12 February 1903, which grew into the Indian Missionary Society.³ "Indian money, Indian personnel and Indian fields" was their principle. Similarly, but on a national scale, the National

1. They were impelled by an "overpowering feeling that they could not keep it to themselves...that the good news has to be shared with others." See R. W. Scott, *Evangelism in India*, Ecumenical Studies, Geneva: WCC, October 1952, p. 16.

2. From reports written by students at the South India Biblical Seminary as class assignments for a course in the history of missions, taught by the author.

3. The IMS steadily grew from its Dornakal field (1903) into Paliyar (1908), Malkangiri, Orissa (1967), Sukma, Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh (1976), Indi in Bijapur district of Karnataka (1979) and Osmanabad of Maharashtra (1979), increasing its personnel to 25 in 1953, 48 in 1973 and 86 in 1980.

Missionary Society was founded on 25 December 1905 at Serampore in the William Carey Library Hall.⁴ The Home Missionary Society of the LMS churches in Travancore area (1900), the Board of Missions of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India in the 1920s and the interdenominational Dipti Mission of Sahibganj, Bihar (1925) are other examples of Indian missions in pre-Independence India.⁵

At the very first synod meeting in 1948 the Church of South India constituted a Board of Missions⁶ to coordinate and supervise the work done by diocesan missions. Presently there are the Indian Missionary Society of Thirunelveli, Parkal Mission of Madhya Kerala, the Mulug Mission of Dornakal and Krishna Dioceses, the Nilgiri Tribal Mission of Coimbatore Diocese, the Gubbi Mission of Karnataka Central Diocese, combined efforts of Madras Diocese with CNI Kolhapur Diocese etc. The Church of North India similarly constituted a synod executive committee for evangelism. The Methodist Church in India has administered Goa and Andaman Islands missions as well as home missions.⁷ The Syrian Orthodox Church has "The Servants of the Cross," established in 1924.⁸ The St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India began its missions in 1961.⁹ The Evangelical Church of India organised its Indian Missionary Movement in 1974. The Southern Baptists of USA used their Baptist Mission Hospital in Bangalore for effective evangelism through the Indian Baptist Mission, and saw rapid growth of their Karnataka Baptist Sabegala Samajam. The Council of Baptist Churches of North East India at their centenary started a missionary movement. Chakesong Outreach Mission, Nagaland Missionary Movement, Gospel Missionary Society,

4. NMS works in Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kashmir, Gujarat and Andaman Islands. See DF Ebright, *The National Missionary Society of India, 1905-1942*, Chicago, 1944; and *IRM*, XX, p. 31 and XXV, pp. 195-205.

5. See Roger Hedlund and F Hrangkhuma, *Indigenous Missions of India*, Madras: Church Growth Research Centre, 1980, pp. 49, 111-112, 156.

6. Cf. Rajaiah D Paul, *The First Decade: An Account of the Church of South India*, Madras: CLS, 1958; *The Church of South India After Thirty Years*, report of a special committee appointed by the CSI Synod to study the life and work of the Church, Madras: CLS, 1978; Hedlund and Hrangkhuma, *op. cit.*, pp. 89f.

7. Started in 1969, the Home Mission supported 134 village preachers by 1977. See Hedlund and Hrangkhuma, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

8. A missionary and social brotherhood to improve the religious and social welfare of the "depressed classes" in Travancore and Cochin. See RW Scott, *Evangelism in India*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

9. For this and the following see Hedlund and Hrangkhuma, *op. cit.*

Zoram Baptist Mission, Presbyterian Synod Board of Missions in Mizoram and several such were born in North East India. Lutherans of different areas developed their mission work differently; Rewa Mission in Madhya Pradesh, near neighbour and cross-cultural evangelism of the church itself in others. Pentecostal churches such as the Maranatha, Indian Pentecostal, Ceylon Pentecostal, Assemblies of God and the Charismatic full gospel churches were each extremely missionary in their orientation.

Such denominational mission structures were under much restraint and exercised limited impact in the expansion of the church. Soon interdenominational indigenous missionary societies emerged with great enthusiasm. As RD Paul says,

The great defect is that the Indian Church is not sufficiently evangelistic....in recent times there have come into existence several indigenous missionary societies....But, apart from the financial support...given...Indian Christians have not yet realised that it is personal evangelism and personal witnessing by Christian living that can win people over to Christianity.¹⁰

In post-Independence India, RD Paul lamented that Bishop Azariah's slogan "every baptised Christian a missionary" had not been actualised.¹¹ Evangelism remained a specialist job, performed by mission societies rather than the church itself. The two great needs of the church were, one, for people to be awakened to their responsibility for the evangelisation of the country and two, for sacrificial and liberal giving to support God's work. As far as the Church of South India was concerned, its constitution said that

The Church of South India...believes that the Holy Spirit has guided the churches into this union in order that the work of evangelisation may be the more effectually fulfilled, in accordance with the prayer which Christ prayed....[And it] purposes ever to be mindful of its missionary calling.¹²

With regard to the bishop,

It is the duty of the Bishop to take the lead in evangelistic work of the diocese; and he should do all in his power to foster and promote

10. See RD Paul, *The Cross Over India*, London: SCM, 1952, pp. 110f.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *The Constitution of the Church of South India with amendments up to 31st December 1951, together with the Basis of Union as adopted by the Governing Bodies of the United Churches in India and Elsewhere*, Madras: CLS for India, 1952, see Chapter 2, paragraph 3 on pp. 3-4.

it both by his own example and also by the encouragement he gives to others.¹³

With regard to the clergy,

It is the special duty of a presbyter...to use every opportunity to preach the gospel to non-Christians and to bring men to the obedience of the faith.¹⁴

And with regard to the members, it said that it is their

duty...to witness by life and word to Jesus Christ....This work of evangelisation may be done both by individuals and by group.¹⁵

The first synod reaffirmed these and, as earlier noted, constituted a Board of Missions. The very themes of the early synods reveal the central concerns of the CSI: "Indian Leadership, Self-Support and Evangelism" (1952), "A New Pattern for the Church in India" (1954), "Presenting Christ to India Today" (1956).¹⁶ But already in 1954 the realisation was present that

the intelligentsia of the country have hardly been touched yet....There is hardly an organised work being done among Muslims in South India....Laity are comparatively inert and are not sufficiently pulling their weight in the evangelistic adventure. "The laity stand at the very outpost of the kingdom of God. They are the missionaries of Christ in every secular sphere;" and yet the Christian laity in India form largely an immobile if not paralysed limb of the body of Christ.¹⁷

Further, a decline of effectiveness, a mediocrity and a slackening of a sense of commitment were recognised by the CSI Commission on Integration and Joint Action in 1963 as a "lack of spiritual vigour and commitment" in the "Church's inner life."¹⁸ Though on a global level the Willingen meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1952 called for a "reshaping of missionary activity at every level,"¹⁹ it had no immediate direct effect in India within the historic churches. A decade later the NCCI resolved to urge church leaders and mission board secretaries

13. *Ibid.*, p. 22 (Chapter IV, Rule 2).

14. *Ibid.*, p. 31 (Chapter V, Rule I. 5).

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-46 (Chapter VI, Rule 1, 2b).

16. See RD Paul, *The First Decade*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-129.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

18. See *Renewal and Advance*, Report of the CSI Commission on Integration and Joint Action, Madras: CLS for CSI Synod, 1963, pp. 42ff. The commission was chaired by RD Paul.

19. See *The Missionary Obligation of the Church*, Report of the IMC Conference at Willingen, West Germany, July 5-17, 1952, London: EHP, 1953.

to attempt to discover what God is calling the Church in India to be and to do.... To work out specifically an effective partnership between the Church here and the Mission Boards, so that the total task of the Church may be accomplished.²⁰

The discovery of the commission was alarming: "The Synod Board of Missions gradually lost sight of its first responsibility of stimulating the dioceses to greater evangelistic efforts" and much of what is done "is not well organised but is sporadic and for the most part ineffectual."²¹ The CSI was "Yet far from achieving the ideal of 'every Christian an evangelist,' 'every congregation an active witness to Christ.'"²² The blame for this state of the church was "to a large extent justifiable, laid on the ministers of the Church;" "presbyters seem to be men without vision...overburdened with administrative work."²³

Revival of Evangelism in the Fifties

Though right motivations were noted in the church constitution and in international gatherings of Christians, the actualisation of evangelism in real life came in trickles in the fifties. A sense of urgency in evangelism came from sources that were interdenominational, conservative evangelical and often American. The major event was that of the formation of the Evangelical Fellowship of India. It paved the way for new influences to arrive into India as well as for concerned people to meet together to plan the means and methods of actualising evangelism. Emphasis was laid on prayer for revival, holding of pastors' conferences to revive their commitment to Christ and to inspire them for evangelism, strategic planning for evangelism through radio, literature, city penetration plans, Bible teaching, revival preaching and crusade evangelism. We have already taken note of the way the EFI and its ministries developed.

Azariah Benjamin indicates how in the fifties several evangelistic ministries were started in India, mostly under the influence of Western parachurch ministries which were seeking to reach out to every country.²⁴ India presented a fertile religious soil, and with the events of 1947 became an attractive venue for parachurch ministries that were sprouting in the West. Specific mention should be made here of the beginning of the Vacation Bible School ministries by the South India Biblical Seminary in

20. *Renewal and Advance*, op. cit., p. xiii.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

24. See Azariah Benjamin, "Key to Church Growth: A History of Factors that Led to Church Growth in India," *Mission Outreach*, XVII:4, April 1984, p. 10.

1952, its rapid growth and influence, the beginning of Children's Special Service Mission and Scripture Union, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Youth for Christ, and the work among college students through the Union of Evangelical Students of India and a host of others. Immediately following these, the Billy Graham crusades and cassette tape ministries also aroused much interest in revival and evangelism. The need to train workers for various of these new ministries was helped by the newly formed evangelical Bible seminaries, of which we shall consider the most important two in the following pages, The Union Biblical Seminary at Yavatmal and the South India Biblical Seminary at Bangarapet.

But first we must consider the numerous parachurch ministries that developed in India in the fifties and after to emphasise the evangelistic mission of the church in India.

Evangelical Parachurch Ministries

Unlike the earlier phase of missions when missionary societies sent all kinds of missionaries for church planting, the mid-twentieth century saw specific ministry groups sending their specialist missionaries to accomplish tasks unrelated to church planting. They were parachurch ministries in the countries of their origin and were formed as parachurch ministries in India. They chose, trained and employed Indian Christians and developed national structures often with no reference to the church. The newly formed national evangelical structure - the EFI - gave necessary support for such new arrivals²⁵ and often relied on them for its own identity and strength, more than on the churches of the soil. Initially funds from abroad were used and they always operated on a shoe-string budget similar to faith missions²⁶ and systematically began to seek indigenous support.²⁷ Twenty and thirty years later now, most of them are well established as national structures with national leaders, training programmes and to a large extent indigenous support. Most

25. Every such new ministry became a member of the EFI and strengthened it. EFI gained by financial membership fees and contributions, as well as when EFI secretaries exercised leadership in ministry and on the boards of these new ministries. The mutual encouragement enabled the national structure of EFI and new ministries to thrive and grow.

26. For an understanding of faith missions, see Moira J McKay, "Faith and Facts in the History of the China Inland Mission, 1832-1905," Unpublished M. Litt. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1981, pp. 452.

27. The author is personally acquainted with agencies which encouraged their staff to raise local support, initially 10% of their salary fund, slowly and steadily (annually or triennially) increasing the percentage with a view to achieve total indigenous support in a given period.

notable among them are the following:

Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI). In the cities of Madras, Vellore and Coimbatore, unknown and unrelated to one another, Bible study groups were meeting in the homes of college professors. University students were taught faith and the Bible. When they became aware of each other, they formed the Inter-Collegiate Evangelical Union (ICEU), which later in 1954 grew into a nationwide movement as the UESI. An Inter-Varsity missionary, Dr. Norton Sterrett, landed at Madras with the intention of working with college students and was introduced to the ICEU and in turn he introduced to the UESI a worldwide movement, The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.²⁸ In 1979 when the UESI celebrated its Silver Jubilee at Secunderabad, it was reported that there were about 200 places where Evangelical Unions worked with students and that there were an equal number of contact centres throughout the country.²⁹ About 40 staff workers and associates led the evangelical students and graduates in establishing an evangelical witness on university and college campuses all over India.

The strategy³⁰ was to contact individuals and bring them into small evangelistic Bible study groups. Those who became committed to Jesus Christ through an encounter with him, were brought into a discipleship Bible study and prayer cell, trained to witness and strengthened through retreats and discipleship camps. Some were trained at national and state level training programmes to become committee members and leaders of local groups. National Training Camps for committee members were held at UESI's property "High Field," in Kotagiri in the Nilgiri hills.

28. Dr. and Mrs. Norton Sterrett were instrumental in getting the UESI Study and Training Centre at High Field, Kotagiri, Nilgiris. The headquarters is at Millers Road, Kellys, Kilpauk, Madras 600010. For an understanding of the development of this movement, see JC Pollock, *A Cambridge Movement*, London: John Murray, 1953; Geraint Fielder, *Lord of the Year: Sixty Years of Student Witness, The Story of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship*, Leicester: IVP, 1988; and the *UESI Handbook*, Madras: UESI.

29. The Reports of UESI in its *Evangelical Student* and *Our Link* reveal the growth pattern. See the Silver Jubilee report in December 1979 and February 1980 issues of *Our Link*. The author was an active member of UESI and participated in the Silver Jubilee Celebrations at Secunderabad.

30. Much of the information is from personal acquaintance of the author, who attended the national training camp at Kotagiri in 1969, graduates conferences in 1970 and 1975-82 annually, served as Karnataka State Graduate Fellowship leader and national honorary staff worker in charge of the Theological Students Fellowship between 1977-82 while teaching at SIBS; and taught at the Study Centre in 1981.

Emphasis on small cell groups made the movement easily managed by students. After the students graduated and got employed, they linked together in the Evangelical Graduates' Fellowship locally and through district and state level programmes to find mutual encouragement. A series of retreats and conferences at local, regional, state and national levels offered them opportunities to meet fellow believers within their own professional categories. After a decade of strengthening the movement, UESI formed the "Professional Associates" in the seventies such as the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India (EMFI), Evangelical Teachers Fellowship of India (ETFI), Evangelical Government Servants and Business Men's Fellowship, etc.³¹ During the late seventies and eighties these groups met to address the relevance of the gospel to their own particular professional backgrounds. Another emphasis during this period was that of the "Christian Family," through conferences facilitating a better understanding of the role of each member of the family unit in the Indian cultural setting where so much was against Christian ethics in terms of caste, dowry, place of women, sexuality, management of time, etc.

UESI's missionary conferences challenged numerous of its student leaders to enter full-time Christian ministry. Some after theological education at reputed colleges entered pastoral ministry in historic churches, others after various trainings joined parachurch ministries and many went for pioneer mission work with indigenous mission societies. UESI thus boosted the evangelical theological colleges and supplied evangelical pastors to churches.³² To cater for those who studied theology and to encourage evangelical scholarship, UESI formed and ran the Evangelical Theological Students Fellowship (ETSF) for about a decade.³³ Three decades after its formation UESI has seen large numbers of evangelical college graduates both in church and parachurch ministries and outside in secular occupations rendering Christian witness.

UESI has grown enormously within a quarter of a century into a strong lay movement to nurture many into faith and to develop an evangelical network of pastors, laity and ministries throughout the country.

31. This could be traced through the periodicals *Evangelical Student and Church Link*. ETFI publishes its own *Chalk and Chai*.

32. Union Biblical Seminary draws about a quarter of its students through the influence of UESI.

33. The author participated in ETSF conferences at Yeotmal 1971 and Bangalore 1975, directed the ETSF conferences at Bangarapet 1976, Secunderabad 1979, Bethel 1980 and Bangarapet 1981, and published the reports in *Sophia*, the official organ of ETSF.

maintained a strictly pietistic and conservative theology and practice, unlike its counterpart the Student Christian Movement, which exhibited a strong sense of social awareness, political and economic consciousness and an emphasis on nation-building. It either replaced weak SCM units or developed strong alternative pietistic units. A sense of rivalry was prevalent between the two movements. Attempts were made to combine forces through negotiations when official representatives from both the SCM and the UESI met as early as in 1974. But theological and methodological variance hindered co-operation. Both structures continued to thrive and grow, UESI at a comparatively higher velocity.

The **Scripture Union (SU)** and the **Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM)** have over fifty staff working all over the nation. Most staff have had Bible School training, some obtaining B.Th. and B.D. degrees. Most staff are unordained laymen, conducting school missions, camps and summer Vacation Bible Schools in co-operation with other evangelical agencies and churches to provide evangelistic and discipleship training to children and youth. A national network, the Scripture Union Teachers' Fellowship (SUTF), has developed to support the work.³⁴ Literature is increasingly produced from within India.

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF). Through the efforts of an American missionary, Miss Agatha Martyn, CEF has grown into a national movement of 63 staff contacting over a hundred thousand children a year and training hundreds of laymen and women in the art of winning children to Jesus.³⁵

Training programmes are held at Nasik and Bangalore. Predominantly, CEF uses material produced in North America both for training and evangelism. Eighty per cent of staff support is raised from within India. A split in the fellowship led to the formation of the **Bible Club Movement** which carries on a similar ministry among children.

Youth For Christ (YFC) is a popular organisation based at Madras with over 40 staff working in the major cities of India. Through their Bible clubs, youth rallies, teen challenge camps, youth leadership training schools and all-India youth conferences, they minister to young people.

34. Scripture Union work is led by an Indian council. General Secretary John Jacob's pioneering work was carried on by Gnanaraja of Madras. The work drew indigenous support within a short period. SU published *Daily Bread*, devotional guides written by Indian Christians, and co-operates with churches and other agencies to effectively reach children and youth.

35. Quoted from the National Director S Prince's letter to the author. Headquarters at 15 Hall Road, Richards Town, Bangalore 560 005.

As a result of YFC many youth have entered full-time Christian ministry. YFC relies very much on training material produced by YFC in the West, such as the international training manual, and has produced very little indigenous material in India. Staff are mostly supported from overseas funds.³⁶ A split in the movement led to the birth of **International Needs** and **Global Outreach**.

Global Outreach has set up a national network of evangelists, developing their own ministry to youth and the church. Music, rallies and conventions form the bulk of their work among youth in the cities.

Training Evangelistic Leadership (TEL) is a programme of training in evangelism by taking two or three candidates at a time to reside with the director and to learn methods of evangelism.³⁹

India Every Home Crusade (IEHC) is a literature evangelism programme linked with the World Literature Crusade. It attempts to distribute tracts to every home in most states of India and in some has second coverage of tracts to every home. Those who respond are given Bible correspondence courses and those who complete the course are brought together in seekers' conferences and those who become Christians are linked initially in a "Christ Group," a half-way house to the church.⁴⁰

Operation Mobilization(OM) was started as "Send the Light" ministry by George Verwer of America while he was a student at Moody Bible Institute. It has attracted many youth to join its teams, to learn discipleship and discipleship, to engage in active scripture distribution and to witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ. The ministry itself is self-supported through sale of books, though the books, the vans and drivers come from the West. Their ships (*Logos* and *Doulos*) are used for educational book exhibitions, attracting literally millions to come on board the ships.

36. Victor Manogoram gave leadership from its inception and directed all regional work. National leadership was given by Sam Thanaseelan, August 1970. Asir and Christopher David from the headquarters at 23 Damodara Mudaliar Road, Kellys, Kilpauk, Madras 600 010.

37. The work of International Needs was based at Bangalore and Varanasi. Leaders included Sheila Massey and Ken Gnanakan.

38. Rajah Thyagaraj directed the work from Madras.

39. Directed by Jacob Prabhu from Secunderabad.

40. IEHC was led by the South East Asia Director, BAG Prasad in Secunderabad. There were several level directors. For details on Christ groups see C George's paper presented at the All-India Christian Communication Seminar, Nagpur, 8-12 November 1977, "Incorporation of New Believers into the Church."

and get in some way introduced to the Christian faith through tracts and books. OM has helped churches, missionary societies and seminaries by providing practical work opportunities for their youth and candidates, as well as it has organised co-operative special evangelistic programmes in the North Indian states.⁴¹

Gospel Recordings Association has specialised in producing cheaper records and simple record players, to distribute to the tribals in interior jungles and hills of India. Remote tribes are visited by their staff, their languages learnt and the Christian message recorded for missionaries to use with much ease through hand cranked cardboard players.⁴²

Evangelical Literature Service. A chain of bookstores in the cities of India with headquarters at Madras and a printing press at Bangalore prints and supplies evangelical literature. Seminary-trained men and women are employed as managers to run bookstores as a ministry to the church.⁴³

Gospel Literature Service based at Bombay similarly caters to the need for Christian literature in India by printing and supplying evangelical literature.⁴⁴ Similar is the service of **Masihi Sahitya Sanstha** at Delhi⁴⁵ and the **Christian Literature Centre** at Pune.

Radio Evangelism. **Far East Broadcasting Associates**, **Back to the Bible Broadcasting Associates**, **Trans World Radio** and several other independent programme suppliers work to use radio waves to propagate the Christian gospel. Seminary graduates are employed by them to do follow-up work with those who respond to the radio message by enrolling for Bible correspondence courses.⁴⁶

41. OM operated from its offices at Bombay and Bangalore. Love Maharashtra, RUN (Reach Unreached Now) programme in Bihar and other special emphasis were the way OM gave strategic leadership to train youth as well as to do evangelism.

42. Directed by Frank Antony from headquarters at 2 Commissariat Road, Bangalore.

43. VM Abraham was general secretary, directing the work from Madras. ELS branches are found at Madras, Bangalore, Vellore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur, etc.

44. ME Eapen led GLS through its initial stages. Printing press and headquarters are at Bombay.

45. Sushil K Bose directed *Masihi Sahitya Sanstha* from Delhi. Ambassador Press was linked with MSS.

46. The Buckwalters, Bishan Singh and Emil Jebasingh were directors of these programmes located at Bangalore and Delhi, with branch offices at several cities to facilitate correspondence courses and follow-up.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) Ministries. Various church groups produce their own material in the different languages of India and serve regionally. VBS, started by South India Biblical Seminary, has grown by linking with the Scripture Union – Children Special Service Mission, Youth for Christ, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Bible Club Movement and other agencies to serve with the Christian education programmes of the churches. It is a ten-day course run with a 13 year curriculum, course material written and produced by staff of SIBS. Men like P Samuel and JD Arulmani have enabled the growth of the work into Tamilnadu and all over the country in most major language areas.⁴⁷

Relief and Developmental Agencies such as **World Vision of India** (Madras), the **EFI Commission on Relief** (Delhi and Bangalore), **Compassion** (Madras), **FARMS International** (Madras),⁴⁸ **Bread for the World** (Delhi) and others have had funds from the richer nations to share with the poor of India, both for relief and developmental purposes as well as for Christian nurture. Whereas these would claim strictly evangelical roots, many ecumenical structures also accomplish similar work. The churches, such as the **Churches' Auxiliary for Social Action** (CASA) of NCCI (Delhi), **Kinder Nolt Hilfe** (KNH, a German funding programme of sponsorship for children, which works with CSI and CNI structures as the Council for Child Care based at Bangalore and Nagpur), **Christian Children's Fund** (CCF), etc. These work more closely with the church though they are themselves parachurch structures.

Scripture Gift Mission, with headquarters at Bangalore, receives and distributes scripture tracts and posters, printed in England in various Indian languages.⁴⁹

Ambassadors For Christ (AFC), a team of evangelists with headquarters and retreat centre at Bangalore, specialise in revival

47. SIBS VBS Ministry was located at 3 Norris Road, Richmond Town, Bangalore 560 025. In Tamilnadu itself there were two others, one at Palayamkottai and another of Lutherans from Vaniyambadi. There were other VBS programmes of a denominational nature in the rest of India.

48. Relief work in a country like India with its tremendous problem of poverty and population explosion is impossible from indigenous Christian resources. Hence, much of what is done by relief agencies is with foreign capital. A redemptive factor is the self-help programmes that they promote. Directors Chakravarthy of Compassion, MJ John of Farms India, CB Samuel of EFICOR and a team of men in World Vision guided the many projects which to a very large extent were linked to churches throughout the nation.

49. A Bakiaraj directed the work from Bangalore.

preaching and evangelistic crusades. They have developed a school of evangelism to train lay Christians.⁵⁰

Campus Crusade for Christ India is a branch of the organisation started by Bill Bright in USA. With its all-India headquarters in Bangalore,⁵¹ CCCI has steadily expanded its work in India through university student ministry, "Here is Life" city evangelization crusades and village outreach with the film "Jesus," with the sound track dubbed in all the major languages of India.

Christian Education Department of EFI (CEEFI), formed in 1962, has steadily grown into a national movement with state-level programmes and national triennial conferences, training programmes and conferences. It attempts to bring together all the Christian education ministries to facilitate fellowship, co-operation and mutual support. CEEFI has produced evangelically-oriented teaching material for Sunday Schools, youth groups and adult Bible studies.⁵² **India Sunday School Union** and NCCI programmes are competed with by CEEFI literature and the friction is rooted in the differences in their emphases - one spiritual and experiential and the other the social and contextual. A combination of the two emphases would begin a holistic Christian education programme and prove more relevant.

Much of the staff for these above parachurch organizations are trained at the evangelical seminaries, particularly the South India Biblical Seminary and Union Biblical Seminary, both of which we shall consider in detail. Those which provide their own staff training depend heavily on material produced by their parent Western structures, such as the Child Evangelism Fellowship and Youth For Christ. Others produce their own training manuals using available Western resource materials.

Another arena of parachurch ministry that developed from the fifties at a rapid pace is that of the indigenous missions of India, which function interdenominationally and, as far as possible, indigenously.

Interdenominational Indigenous Missions

It was during the post-Independence decades, particularly in the 60s

50. Augustine Salins, who was popularly known as the weeping prophet, directed the work for two decades. Paul Devakumar then directed for a short period. Evangelists are placed at different cities. They major on revival preaching.

51. CCCI grew rapidly at places, competing with the work of UESI. Its Here is Life and Jesus Film ministries are systematically covering the cities and villages of India.

52. CEEFI was directed by Francis Sunderraj of EFI from Secunderabad. Numerous staff served regionally through regional committees and programmes.

and 70s, that South India saw a proliferation of indigenous, evangelical, interdenominational missionary societies.⁵³ The 40s were a period of preparation, when national identity and selfhood emerged; the 50s a period of evangelical revival when the Evangelical Fellowship of India, the Union Biblical Seminary, the Union of Evangelical Students of India, the Vacation Bible School ministry of the South India Bible Institute and several others were born. The 60s and 70s saw consistent revival and missionary zeal which gave birth to indigenous structures for missionary activity.⁵⁴ We shall now consider the missionary societies born in the fifties.

EFI's missionary arm, **The Indian Evangelical Mission**. In 1955 Dr. I. Ben Wati presented a missionary challenge, the EFI executive committee appointed a committee of seven nationals to organise a "Vision Missionary Movement." The Varghese M Kattapuram family was sent to Kenya. In 1957 a new name was adopted, Indian Evangelical Overseas Mission. After a period of languishing, in 1965, it became the Indian Evangelical Mission, omitting the "overseas." Theodore Williams, a teacher at South India Bible Institute, was appointed part-time honorary secretary. In 1969 he left his teaching work and became the full-time secretary of IEM. The two-fold objective of IEM was to take the gospel to the unreached tribals and to challenge Indian Christians to realise their responsibility in evangelisation.⁵⁵ In 1968 IEM had five single missionaries; by 1978 it had 31 couples, 9 single men and 2 single women, a total of 73 missionaries.⁵⁶ In 1984 the number was a hundred, working in Andaman Islands, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and also Papua New Guinea. IEM takes Bible School trained candidates and further trains them in its missionary training programme.⁵⁷ 95% of the funds are reported as raised indigenous. IEM's fields have grown steadily. Promotion centres on state-level

53. Theodore Williams referred to this as "mushrooming growth" in his "Emerging Missions" in *World Missions: Building Bridges or Barriers?* Bangalore: World Missions Commission, 1979, p. 27.

54. See Azariah Benjamin, "Key to Church Growth: A History of Factors that Led to Church Growth in India," *Mission Outreach*, XVII:4, April 1984, p. 10.

55. Quoted from IEM promotional booklets.

56. See Hedlund and Hrangkhuma, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Esther Williams, *Sacrifice or Involvement: IEM History for Twenty Years*, Bangalore: Outreach Publications, 1985.

57. We shall consider this when we consider the missionary training programmes.

58. Only 10 to 15% is reported as used for administrative expenses.

committees and annual regional and state conferences, as well as national conferences.

Friends Missionary Prayer Band. When an evangelist of the South India Bible Institute, Brother P. Samuel, took the Vacation Bible School ministry into his home town of Koilpatti in Thirunelveli in 1952, an exciting development started. The teaching material was impregnated with a missionary theme. Children and youth brought to Christian commitment were organised into prayer groups with a missionary burden. Out of those prayer groups grew the Friends Missionary Prayer Band in 1957.⁵⁹ P. Samuel remained the visionary architect behind the developments. Veterinarian turned singer-pastor-evangelist the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kamaleson had been its president. Earlier Emil Jebasingh was the secretary and then Patrick Joshua led the growing work. An all Tamilnadu movement, it soon spread to the Tamil diaspora elsewhere and attracted wider participation and is the largest of the indigenous mission societies. In 1967 the first missionary was sent to the hill tribes in Dharmapuri district in Tamilnadu. By 1972 the vision enlarged to include the eleven states of North India (Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh). FMPB set a target to send 440 missionaries to the 220 districts of the 11 North Indian states by 1982. Through a network of local prayer groups, district level "Gideonite meetings" and area level "challenge meetings" and the annual conference, FMPB presented its burden to "go or Send." From Mark 16:15 a motto was taken to "Preach, Teach, Train, Establish." The missionary theme was effectively communicated through paintings, charts and posters drawn by a converted artist, Navaneethar, and through new songs charged with missionary concern and challenge⁶⁰ and through the annual meetings held at Bethel.⁶¹ Thousands gathered and every year hundreds of youth and couples responded to a call to pioneer missionary service. The excitement of the Christian mela⁶² was marked by an increase in

59. The term Friends in the name has no denominational connotation.

60. The use of songs for missionary promotion in contemporary Tamil Christianity is a study in itself. See the author's unpublished paper dealing with this, "A Theology of Mission Reflected in Contemporary Tamil Christian Songs: An Analysis."

61. Bethel is the campus where the Bethel Agricultural Fellowship is located, housing its hospital, children homes, school, Bible Institute, guest houses, industries and farm. Bethel hosts various conferences throughout the year. In the author's opinion, Bethel is a modern miracle in missions in India.

62. Mela = festival or *jathra*. See JT Seamands, "Jathra" in RW Scott's *Evangelism in India*, Madras: CLS for NCCI, 1953, pp. 83-90.

recruitment so that by 1978 FMPB had 119 missionaries and the number rose to about three hundred. *Araikooval* and *Mitra* are the official organs in Tamil, English and Hindi. With headquarters in Madras and regional offices in Jhansi, Nagpur and elsewhere, FMPB attempts to fulfil its vision. It draws candidates from many evangelical seminaries such as South India Biblical Seminary, Bible Institute of India, Bible Seminary, Hindustan Bible Institute and trains more from the Bethel Bible Institute and Kalvary Bible Seminary.

The Prayer Partner's Fellowship, organised in 1956 at Tiruvananthapuram, had twenty five missionaries working in Kerala and Jammu-Kashmir in 1979. It claims 95% Indian financial support for its work.⁶³

The All India Prayer Fellowship, organised in 1957 by Dr PYNarayanaiah, works in 18 different states among 44 different language groups. In 1978 the fellowship reported 30% Indian support to its 227 missionaries and planned to add a hundred more by 1981.

The Asia Evangelistic Fellowship of India (AEF), organised by the Tamil Christian Dr GD James of Malaysia, started work in India by 1963. James pioneered a work among the Asian – particularly Indian – diaspora in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada and USA.

Kashmir Evangelical Fellowship (KEF), started in 1963 by the Rev. PM Thomas, a graduate of Union Biblical Seminary, had 38 workers in 1978, 87% supported from Indian funds. They plan to have 100 missionaries by the year 1990 in their church planting mission in Kashmir.

Indian Inland Mission, started by the Rev. KV Paul Pillai, had 48 workers in 1978 working in Delhi, Haryana, Kashmir and Punjab. It owns Grace Bible College and Grace Medical Centre and plans a technical training centre.

Partnership Mission Society, founded in 1969, has two high schools, seventy village schools and a hospital and works in Tripura, Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya areas of North East India, supported 20% by Indian funds.

Quiet Corner India, started in 1971 by Thomas Samuel, earlier of the Operation Mobilization of India, runs a retreat centre and evangelistic outreach among hill tribes in the Nilgiris.

Full Gospel Young Men Association (FGYMA), a charismatic ministry, was established in 1972 by two laymen, Stanley and Lionel.

63. See Hedlund and Hrangkhuma's account on all the following missions

Vellore. It promotes revival through its youth camps known as "Blesso," "Join Jesus" evangelistic programmes, "Students for Jesus" university ministries, "Divine Deliverance" crusades and village outreaches in Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. A women's wing developed later.

Gospel Echoing Missionary Society (GEMS), started by the Rev Dr Augustine Jebakumar in 1972, had 19 workers in 1978 stationed in Bihar, fully supported by Indian funds.

Thlaraubo Zawngtute (Seekers of Lost Souls), started in 1972, is supporting voluntary missionaries in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, supported fully by prayer groups in Mizoram.

Christian Fellowship Centre (CFC), begun in 1973 at Ludhiana, had 38 staff in 1978 working in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Discipleship Centre, started in 1973 at Delhi, has 24 staff working in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura.

Christian Endeavour for Hill Tribes, founded in 1974 by pastor TK Mahanti in Andhra, had seven workers in 1978 in church planting work among aboriginals in Bagatha, Valmiki, Porja Kupiga, Khond and Konda Bora areas, supported 90% with indigenous funds.

Church Growth Missionary Movement (CGMM), originally started as Madurai Missionary Movement in 1975 by NJ Gnaniah and B Jeyaraj, graduates of Union Biblical Seminary, under the influence of the teachings of Donald McGavran, works in unreached villages of Madurai district and among tribes in Central India. *Thiruchabai Valarchi* is their Tamil monthly news report.

India Church Growth Mission (ICGM) split from CGMM in 1978 and does similar work. Whereas CGMM links its work and converts with the Church of South India, ICGM has developed into a denomination, namely the Madurai Bible Fellowship linked with the Federation of Evangelical Churches of India. *Valarum Irai Arasu* is their Tamil monthly news report.

Voice of Gospel, a Pentecostal mission born in 1975, had ten workers by 1978 working among low caste people in Kerala.

Tribal Mission, founded in 1977 by Mohan Kurien, works among tribals in Kerala, such as Muthuvas, Malayalars, Mannas, Malamuthas, Irulas and Alars. Its seven workers in 1980 were 85% supported by Indian funds.

Christian Outreach Uplifting New Tribes (COUNT), started in 1977 by G John, houses tribal children with a view to developing them into

educated Christian leaders of their tribes with Christian influence. The pattern follows that of Bethel Agricultural Fellowship. Near Hyderabad has a farm, a Bible school, a vocational training centre and several "homes" housing children from the tribes. *Agape Bulletin* is the occasional news report.

Goodwill Extension Services coordinates volunteers working with Arab traders and tourists in Bombay from 1977.

Gilgal Gospel Mission, started in 1979 by C Russeliah, a graduate of South India Biblical Seminary and a pastor of the CSI in Secunderabad, had church planting work in slums, villages and tribal sectors in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamilnadu.⁶⁴

This list is not complete. The eighties saw many more structures like **Maharashtra Village Ministries**, **The Only Way**, **Dying Seeds**, **Ministries Fellowship**, **LEADS Outreach** and numerous others. These indigenous developments affect the church, arousing awareness of missionary responsibility in India.

In evangelical groups around the world, such developments are praised as the emergence of the Third World missions,⁶⁵ a "significant fact,"⁶⁶ a "new missionary era,"⁶⁷ "new forces in missions,"⁶⁸ "New Resources for World Evangelization"⁶⁹ and "The New Age of Missions."⁷⁰ They define

64. See C Russeliah, "What is GGM?," *India Missions*, 5:2, April-June 1980, pp 5-6.

65. See James Wong, Peter Larson, Edward Pentecost, *Mission from the Third World*, Singapore: Church Growth Study Centre, 1973. The term "Third World" is often debated and Orlando Costas proposed "Two-Thirds World" instead. See his "A Strategy for Third World Missions" in *World Missions: Building Bridges Across Barriers*, op. cit., p. 33. Cf. Martin L Nelson, *The How and Why of the Third World Missions: An Asia Case Study*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976. ML Nelson (ed.), *Readings in Third World Missions: A Collection of Essential Documents*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976.

66. T Williams, "Emerging Missions" in *World Missions: Building Bridges Across Barriers?* op. cit., p. 27.

67. "God is calling churches in Asia, Latin America and Africa to become missionary minded and to become involved in the task of reaching the world," said the executive secretary of EFMA; see Wade Coggins, "The New Missionary Era" in *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

68. David J Cho (ed.), *New Forces in Missions*, Seoul, Korea: East West Center for Mission Research and Development, 1976.

69. Martin L Nelson and Chun Chae Ok, *Asian Mission Societies: New Resources for World Evangelization*, Monrovia, California: MARC, 1976.

70. Lawrence E Keyes, *The New Age of Missions*, Monrovia: MARC, 1984. Keyes is the Director of Overseas Christian Ministries Team in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

contribute much to aid the growth of the church. But there are problems that remain unsolved. First, the church-mission tension continues. Rather than making the church central with the whole membership involved in missions, the missionary societies perpetuate specialist missionaries. The mission field is far away in the tribal unreached areas, to the neglect of the local unreached masses. "Every baptised Christian a missionary" should mean every Christian being affirmed as such and trained in ways of affecting the local situation, addressing local problems and actually becoming socially involved in local affairs. Here involvement might naturally mean economic, political, educational and nation-building activities besides preaching and witnessing activity. Instead, in the mission societies, local problems are not faced, but remote situations are considered with great concern.

From his observation of the developments in the city of Madras, the present general secretary of the CSI synod, M Azariah, comments on the large-scale awakening of the laity for the cause of prayer for revival and evangelism. He notes among the laity a dominant piety with "pietistic exercises of weekly meetings, Bible study, prayer meetings...choir organising, etc.," and laments the thorough lack of concern for relevant socio-political and economic struggles of contemporary society.⁷¹ Whereas the Church of South India attempts equally to develop Christian piety and a Christian social consciousness among its members, numerous smaller church denominations and parachurch agencies have influenced the lay Christians of Madras with a piety which is more like Hindu *bhakti*. It is devoid of rational application of faith to contemporary social issues that face mankind. One could notice in them attitude of "a definite anti-clericalism and even anti-mainline-churches."⁷² Azariah identifies such influences as having come from groups such as the Joshua Daniel's Laymen Evangelical Fellowship, Bakht Singh and other Brethren Assemblies, Pentecostals and the many faith missions from the West. We also should make mention that the parachurch ministries tend to side these groups and their type of piety (representing either an extreme fundamentalist or evangelical position, blending and disagreeing on issues as dictated by their Western roots with but one common denominator in the fight against "liberalism") against the mainline churches, whom they accuse of being "liberal."

Co-operation among Evangelicals

We noted Cattell's comment on the problem of co-operation among

71. See M Azariah, *Witnessing in India Today*, Madras: Diocesan Press for UELCI, 1983, pp. 15-17, 48f.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 48f.

evangelicals. The indigenous missionary societies in India recognise the validity of the argument that

the *church* is the central and basic structure whereas the mission is somehow secondary or perhaps merely a temporary aid in establishing churches: the scaffolding must come down when the building is done...⁷³

But they learn from church history that separate structures to carry on missions was an accepted procedure down through the ages. Paul and Barnabas were "set apart."⁷⁴ Roman Catholic missions were carried on by Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Benedictines and others. Protestants lacked such orders⁷⁵ and hence formed denominational and interdenominational "mission societies" in "the Great Century." Latourette, the church historian, found them "indispensable" for the expansion of Christianity. A contemporary scholarly attitude is revealed in a recent article considering the missionary societies as the "fortunate subversion" of the church.⁷⁷ "Missionary societies or missions are Church in a specialized sense and an essential part of the Church."⁷⁸

Faced with the question, "does India need so many missionary societies?" the indigenous mission founders say "yes." They follow the pattern of the mushrooming of such societies in North America and parts of Europe; and prefer "many smaller boats" to fish out of rather than "a mammoth ship."⁷⁹ One such writes that

One engine cannot pull hundreds of bogies, so also one mission alone may not be able to send thousands of missionaries to our vast land. So let many more missions be born and many more

73. Ralph D Winter, "Churches Need Missions because Modalities Need Sodalities," *EMQ*, 7:4, 1971, pp. 193-200, especially p. 194.

74. Acts 13:2f.

75. Roger E Hedlund, "Structures and Patterns of Third World Missions" in *Indigenous Missions of India*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

76. Kenneth Scott Latourette identified the period between 1792 and 1914 as the Great Century, since many missionary societies were born and carried the gospel to the nations of the world. In his seven volume work, *The History of the Expansion of Christianity*, volumes 4, 5 and 6 deal with this century.

77. See Professor Andrew F Walls, "Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church," *EQ*, 88:2, 1988, pp. 141-155.

78. Quoted from Winter's article, *op. cit.*, in Hedlund's article, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

79. Quoted from Christy Wilson Jr of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, USA in "Why Many Boats?," *India Missions*, 5:2, April-June 1983, p. 1.

missionaries be added. If this is done, the task of reaching India with the message of Christ may be finished soon.⁸⁰

But there was widespread recognition of the need for co-operation among the many societies and structures. Similar to the mood of the late nineteenth century that led to the formation of ecumenical structures, this co-operative mood rose among evangelicals at the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne in 1974. At the follow-up conference for India in 1977, the EFI executive secretary D John Richard proposed

that the existing evangelical, indigenous and interdenominational societies would voluntarily disband themselves and allow the emergence of a new evangelical missionary society of India.⁸¹

Negotiations led instead to the formation of the Indian Missions Association on 16 March 1977, to provide a body of fellowship, mutual inspiration, coordination and sharing of information, techniques and expertise between the many missionary and parachurch ministries.⁸² What EFI had attempted in the previous decades in bringing radio, literature, Christian education and such ministries together under the banners of the Evangelical Radio Fellowship of India, the Evangelical Literature Fellowship of India and the Association of Christian Education, was furthered through the India Missions Association for mission societies. There exists a fair amount of healthy co-operation among evangelical agencies and the EFI lends catalytic help to this. Evangelical theological colleges also have a close link with the mission societies and evangelical agencies. They train the candidates and supply workers to the agencies, and there is consistent and mutual sharing of ministry between the staff of theological seminaries and the agencies, thus bringing a mutual concern. Often they also are in each others' governing boards and thus relate intimately to one another. Also, quite often the seminary teachers, students and the parachurch leaders all belong to a common church denomination, which is not their official employer. Since they are not related to the official structures of the church, its ministerial committee, episcopal ordination and support funds, they hold together to help each other and serve from their parachurch structures of ministry.

Whereas there exists co-operation between parachurch groups, there

80. Russeliah, *ibid.*, p. 6.

81. See D John Richard, "The Missionary Responsibility of the Indian Church Today," strategy paper no. 6 presented at the All-India Congress on Mission and Evangelization, Devlali, January 1977. See the official volume *Go Forth and Tell*, Delhi: EFI 1977.

82. For details on the activities of IMA, see its quarterly *India Missions*.

still is a need to bring about co-operation between the churches and parachurch agencies. In the early eighties this concern was high on the agenda. John Richard was sensitive to this need. He reflected on what has already been achieved in India in his booklet *Evangelical Co-operation*.⁸³ At the July 1980 Consultation on World Evangelisation at Pattaya, his plenary presentation was on developments in unity and co-operation, a study which did not receive sufficient notice in the Lausanne movement. Among the seventeen miniconsultation groups at COWE, one was specifically dealing with the issue of co-operation for evangelism. It addressed the various levels and aspects of co-operation, such as between evangelical agencies themselves, between evangelical structures such as LCWE and WEF, between evangelical structures and churches, etc.⁸⁴ Though there was an informal questionnaire seeking to know if LCWE and WEF should combine together instead of providing two world networks and loyalties to evangelicals, it was decided that LCWE had a specific mandate – that of evangelization – and felt it had sufficient reason to remain a separate structure from WEF. This international evangelical influence was unhealthy for Indian needs. At the regional meeting of the delegates from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, representatives of the younger generation insisted that co-operation was the key issue in effective evangelization.⁸⁵ The result was a resolution to call for a nationwide consultation on co-operation in India. When such a consultation was sponsored by the EFI in collaboration with the NCCI at the SCM House, Bangalore, in October 1981, it brought together about a hundred leaders of the churches, parachurch agencies and theological colleges.⁸⁶ Though there was insufficient follow-up, the gathering gave useful insights into the causes of non-co-operation.

83. See John Richard, *Evangelical Co-operation*, Asian Perspectives No. 16, Taiwan: ATA, 1979.

84. A report of this miniconsultation was published in the Lausanne Occasional Publications series, edited by Keith A Price, *Co-operation in World Evangelization: A Handbook on Church / Parachurch Relationships*, Wheaton: LCWE – LOP no. 24, 1983.

85. Martin Alphonse (Methodist pastor), Siga Arles (vice-principal of SIBSI) and CB Samuel (EFICOR) were the ones to insist on this, whereas representatives of the older generation (such as Vinay Samuel) disagreed and felt there were other urgent issues.

86. The consultation proposed many things, but did not carry out any. Saphir Athyal of UBS and LCWE was asked to see to the preparation of a book on evangelism from an Indian perspective. The author was one of those to write chapters. This book was never published. Co-operation between NCCI and EFI did not develop in any way.

There were already several signs of good co-operation as the following examples illustrate.

1. FMPB, which unofficially draws mostly unordained lay Christians from the CSI dioceses of Tamilnadu and sends them as missionaries, has planted several churches in the South Gujarat tribal area. Their desire was to link these churches to the CNI Gujarat diocese. At a consultation between FMPB and the CNI Gujarat diocese, in the presence of EFI representatives,⁸⁷ the following were resolved: a. Mission fields would be decided by FMPB in consultation with the local pastor and the bishop; b. FMPB missionaries would become members of the CNI local congregations; c. The CNI Gujarat diocese would ordain suitable theologically trained missionaries; d. FMPB missionaries would continue their spiritual ministry among the new congregations with the help of the local pastors and area leaders.

2. Once such a plan emerged, it was also applied to other mission societies, such as the IEM. Gujarat diocese ordained two IEM missionaries in 1984.⁸⁸

3. Several bishops of the CSI and CNI are patrons, board members and chairmen of the many evangelical parachurch agencies, thus extending a right hand of fellowship and acceptance. Bishop Pothirajulu was patron of CGMM, Bishop Thangaswamy was patron of FMPB, Bishops Sundar Clarke, Kenneth Gill and IP Andrews were chairmen of SIBS, World Vision, NMS and such agencies. Bishop JG Chrispal opened the Gujarat diocese to South Indian missionaries.

In all these we notice how the church has been eager to embrace structures that have sprouted outside her authority. But the agencies often feel that they are given step-motherly treatment by the church – the problem is one of the authority of the church and the illegitimacy of the parachurch, as it was expressed at a Bangalore consultation.⁸⁹

87. EFI was represented by its chairman, Isaac Khimla, and promotional secretary, MM Das; Gujarat diocese by Bishop JG Chrispal, and pastors of Vyara, Valsad, Kikakui, Khergam, and Fasnacht and Devadatt; and FMPB by its general secretary, Patrick Joshua, vice-president Chandrashekar, area leaders and missionaries Devadas, SD Ponraj, A Paul and JA Jeyachandran. See "Report and Findings of the Consultation held on 3 October 1978 at Spiritual Life Centre, Bharuch," an unpublished document from the headquarters of FMPB, Madras.

88. See a report by Gladston Anchan in *Mission Outreach*, April 1984, p. 13.

89. These are expressions made by participants in the consultation on co-operation at SCM House, Bangalore. The author participated actively in the whole proceedings.

Evangelical theological education finds it has much raw material (students) available for it to process, and heavy demand for its products (graduates), so that it does not worry over competition. There is room for more in the large harvest fields of India. Not everyone thinks that co-operative togetherness – let alone unity – is a must for the 3% Christians to have an affect on the 97% majority. Particularly those affected by the church growth school hold that large size makes for a silent and inactive majority. They opt for smaller churches with the hope that smallness would ensure better involvement of all in evangelism. Hence new structures and new churches are always brought into existence. But both the minority status within India and the Scriptural mandate "that they may be one" demands Christians to co-operate for the sake of the gospel.

CHAPTER TEN

The Christian Ministry: Changes and Structures through the Sixties and Seventies

The widespread concern to develop relevant understanding of the mission of the church in India, and the organising and training of the ministry for it, motivated numerous events and developments through the period we are considering. Though some of the events may be dated, it would be impossible to strictly specify these developments as bound to a particular year or decade. The cultivation of the soil of general opinion, the sowing of the seeds of innovative methods, time for germination and the occasion of fruition were often spread between several decades. Hence the limitation of the chronology utilised here needs to be held in mind.

What we consider in this chapter are the type of changes that were proposed in the church's understanding of "ministry," the varieties developed, the causative factors and forces and the structures that emerged to enhance the new images of ministry.

Changing Image of Ministry

We noted the proliferation of mushrooming of evangelistic ministries in what were parachurch developments. A parallel account and analysis of what developed within the church in terms of the development of ministry would be in order. As stated elsewhere, there was an importation of the Western understanding of "ministry" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The centrality of the "minister" as "the ordained clergyman" and "ministry" as "what he did" dominated the historic church's understanding of the ministry. Serampore-affiliated colleges majored in preparing ordinands for this traditional ministry. Hence, Ranson's study in 1946 was of the *Christian Minister in India*.¹ It referred to the need to train the unordained, the lay and the female, but did not concern itself with this. A decade later Harrison refers to a concern in the church for the training of unordained paid and voluntary workers.² By the mid-sixties

1. See Charles W Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946.

2. See MH Harrison, *After Ten Years: Theological Education in India*, Nagpur: BTE-NCCI, 1957.

there was a widespread disillusionment with ministry as it was, and a questioning of the efficacy of the Western pattern for the Indian setting. Examples of this are found in the study of the ministry in the Lutheran churches by James Bergquist and Kambar Manickam, the Lutheran Report on the churches in Andhra Pradesh and Nirmal Minz's findings on Lutheran work in Bihar.

The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries

During 1967–68 a study was undertaken by James Bergquist and Kambar Manickam regarding the ministry in the Lutheran churches in India. There were nine groups of Lutheran churches which came together in the Federation of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India. Bergquist, an American Lutheran missionary and Manickam, then a teacher at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, attempted to interpret the way the church understood her ministry, its relevance to the Indian setting, the indigenous model of ministry as found in Hindu and Muslim communities, and the need for revision of Christian ministry. Their findings were later published in 1974 as *The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries*.³

The "missionary standard model" with the missionary in the centre surrounded by consecutive circles of the ordained clergy, the unordained catechist/evangelist/Bible women and the laity, had been imbibed into the church with the native bishop taking the centre when the missionary went home. This "unwholesomely elitist" and "lopsidedly authoritarian" pattern was developed to meet the needs of pastoral care and nurture of fast-growing mass movement churches of the past. Both urgency and the economic and educational situations made for such a pattern. The dependence on the missionary and the paid ordained clergy on the one hand, and the unrecognised yet paid ministry of the unordained on the other, the high view of ordination and the extra-biblical demand it made on the ways of training such a ministry were all the weaknesses of the pattern. Only 6.5% of pastoral responsibilities were catered to by ordained clergy, and 93.5% was left in the hands of unordained and untrained catechists. Theological colleges fed their graduates into such a church system which needed altering. Priority needed to be given to grass-root level workers, instead of carrying on the elitist model. Bergquist and Manickam proposed a *functional theology of ministry*.⁴

3. See Bergquist and Manickam, *The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries*, Madras: CLS, 1974.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 127 ff.

The Kretzmann Commission Report on Theological Education in Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Christian Theological College, with its board members and church leaders from Andhra Pradesh, sponsored a study of the pattern of ministry in the churches in that state. The report was published in 1969.⁵ It argued against the understanding of theological education purely from an academic standpoint. The primary question is "what is the type of ministry needed in the church and how best to prepare men and women for it;" not what kind of academic training will best suit the student to make him equal to people in other professions. Removing the false inequality between ministerial formation and theological education, the report said that "we must shape our theological education for the performance of ministry in the Church....the concepts which people have of ministry must be adjusted to this understanding of the different forms of ministry."⁶ Four forms of ministry applicable to Andhra Pradesh were identified; a teaching ministry by highly trained theologians, a sacramental ministry by men who are natural leaders with minimal theological training, a developmental ministry by person involved in service to society with socio-economic concerns, and lay voluntary ministry. These were implemented in Andhra Pradesh.⁷

Here we note a breadth in the understanding of ministry. Beside the pastoral, sacramental and teaching ministry, other forms of church involvement were accommodated under the concept of Christian ministry.

Minz's "Changing Image of Ministry"⁸

Nirmal Minz located the traditional pattern of ministry as a product of the colonial era when power and pomp went alongside the prestige of the missionary. By the time the natives tried fitting into their shoes, the colonial enterprise had folded. "The status of the pastor has gone down" and other vocations had more prestige and power since the economic and social status of the laymen shot up in independent India. From the context of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bihar, Minz

5. See *Theological Education in Andhra Pradesh: The Kretzmann Commission Report, A Survey and Study of the Task of Theological Education in the Churches related to the Andhra Christian Theological College*, Hyderabad: ACTC, 1969, pp. 61.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

7. See *Renewal of the Ministry in Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad: ACTC, 1974; cf. Victor Premasagar's paper read at the Serampore senate, 1975.

8. See Nirmal Minz, "Changing Image of Ministry," *NCCR*, LXXXV:4, April 1965, pp. 162-172.

observes the demise of the superior and "sahib" image of the minister and comments that the

Pastor as a superman or strong and authoritarian person is giving way to the idea of the pastor as the servant of the Lord whose primary concern is to feed his sheep in the congregation and outside the fold.⁹

He was not sure what the new image would be, but was certain that the change was rooted in the change in the social, economic and political life of the Christian community and the surrounding society.¹⁰ He foresaw a new image in which the *pracharak* (catechist) was one of the roles in ministry.

What Nirmal Minz pointed out in his article "Changing Image of Ministry" in 1965¹¹ has become a lifesize reality in that there were various attempts at various levels that reinterpreted the concepts and methods of ministry. New forms of ministry were sought after. Some sought the new forms without altering the basic structure of ordination and congregational ministry, while others questioned the validity of these basic structures.¹² Attempts to develop new forms of ministry meant adding to the present structures rather than replacing them. On the one hand we notice new types of ministries developing as "frontier ministries" to the urban society, industrial workers, youth workers, community services, etc., often out on the fringe of the organised church. In the previous chapter we considered this development as it took shape in India. Also on the other hand we find an inclusion of women in the ordained category to minister in and on behalf of the church.

Within the Church of South India, one could note the rich variety of such developments. Beside the ordained clergy, there are the theological teachers, catechists, evangelists, missionaries, women workers, administrators, wardens and staff of the institutions of the church such as the hospitals, schools, orphanages, wardens, relief project staff and clerical personnel. As paid workers of the church they all are involved in the ministry of the church. The Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) of the NCCI trains and uses numerous people in the ministry of relief and development. The CSI Council for Child Care (KNH) trains and uses wardens and staff to cater for the care of orphans and semi-orphans, as well as poorer children in its compassionate care ministry. The work and

9. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

11. *Ibid.*

12. See Robin Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-28.

presence of the Student Christian Movement and Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore influenced the St. Mark's Cathedral congregation under the pastoral leadership of Harry F Daniel to form the Industrial Mission, the Industrial Team Service.¹³

One of the affects of national democracy had been the widespread recognition of the value of every citizen, and this leads to a revolutionary change from a culture of submission to a culture of assertion. Movements within the church have encouraged people to become aware of their rights and to stand for them. This applies to rights within the church as well. The Protestant ideal of "every believer a priest" is taken seriously, and within the historic churches, particularly the Church of South India, one finds many avenues of lay ministerial involvement. We shall discuss this when we study developments within the CSI. The wider church began to recognise that the whole church, i.e., the laity as the people of God, was called into mission and that the ordained clergy was to equip the laity to accomplish their mission in the world. This discovery revolutionised the church's approach to theological education. The discovery was made through the many occasions of consultations and studies, the reports of which we must study to gain insight into the ways in which ministerial training was reshaped for the sake of mission in India.

Developments in the Sixties

We note elsewhere in this book that the NCCI urged the Church of South India to establish its Commission on Integration and Joint Action, which studied the church's task in India and published its findings as a report titled *Renewal and Advance*¹⁴ in the year 1963. The NCCI itself had a consultation on "The Mission of the Church in Contemporary India" at Nasrapur, in 1966. The papers and report with findings from this consultation was published as *Renewal for Mission*.¹⁵ With such renewal thinking in the churches, there were definite challenges to the task of theological education and hence renewal in theological education was thought through at different levels.

All India Consultation 1968, "Theological Education in India"

The National Consultation on "Theological Education in India" was held

13. St. Mark's Cathedral accommodated the Urban Industrial Mission and continued to give leadership to developments in industrial missions. Harry F Daniel as pastor gave leadership in this along with Paul Siromani and Alexander Devasundaram, and linked with thought developments in the SCM and CISRS circles.

14. Madras: CSI Synod, 1963.

15. Madras: CLS for NCCI, 1966.

at Bangalore in 1968 as the consummation of many consultations that took place at college and regional levels.¹⁶ It was sponsored by the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI and the Senate of Serampore College. There were two key-note addresses presented by Dr. Kosuke Koyama and Dr. Robin HS Boyd on "The Role of Theology in Asia Today" and "The Indian Reality and Theological Education."¹⁷ Reviewing the two addresses, MM Thomas noted that Koyama and Boyd differed in their approaches concerning the use and rejection of Western theology and raised the crucial issues of indigenous theology, emphasising

the need for Christian theology and theological education in Asia to take seriously the Asian religious and secular realities of life, not only as the context of theological reflection, but also as its starting point and orientation.¹⁸

Since "God is reconciling the world in Jesus Christ,...any thought about Jesus Christ is about the dialogue between the living God and the dynamic world." Here the world is the Indian and Asian reality and the task of theology is to "travail" to give birth to the *morphe* of Christ in the given setting. To Koyama, true theology is "neighbour-ological," a term he coined to express his view that "the greater our concern for our neighbours, the more significant will be our perplexities and the more relevant will be our theological thinking."¹⁹ Thomas noted in Koyama a basic distaste for "a theology of imported questions and imported answers," which led him to place Christological weight in the neighbours, thus attempting for the church in Asia a "new language of comfort and relevance." Theology and theological education in India thus must come from the quest of the context. But in such analysis, Thomas criticises Koyama as being too full of quotations from Western theologians.²⁰

Boyd appreciated the Asian tradition of indigeneity and said that "We need original theological works written in the first place in Indian languages and written with little or no reference to Western models." Even in men like Brahmabandhav, Chenchiah and Chakkarai, Boyd noticed the Western influence as strong. Despite frequent anti-Western polemics

16. See *Theological Education in India*, Report of Study Programme and Consultation 1967-1968, BTE-NCCI and SSC, 1968.

17. These two addresses were published as a supplement to *The Indian Journal of Theology*, July-September 1968.

18. See MM Thomas' review of "Addresses Delivered at the National Consultation on Theological Education, Bangalore 1968, Supplement, *IJT*, July-September 1968" in *RS* XV:4, December 1968, p. 89.

19. See Koyama in the *Supplement*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 4, 22.

20. See Thomas' review, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

the Western structure is often seen beneath the Indian covering. While appreciative of Boyd's emphasis on the need for indigenous theological literature, Thomas is not sure of the need for a "purely Indian theology," which he considers unrealistic and unnecessary in the contemporary inter-dependent world and ecumenical Christianity.²¹

The report of the consultation began with a discussion of the form and tasks of the ministry, distinguishing the gap between the New Testament pattern and present day practice, particularly the role of the pastor.²² There is reference to the minister as enabler, and the need for new forms of ministry and team ministries with involvement in social, cultural and religious issues in the context of urbanisation, industrialisation and secularisation. The report attempted to relate theological education more dynamically to the ministry of the church in India, and defined ministry as meaning the

sharing of India's search for new meaning, for new humanity, not only ministering to men's poverty but also seeking to lead them out of poverty...specialized ministries to men in urban and rural situations...men who face new and unprecedented decisions in their political, economic, intellectual, religious and cultural life...an open-minded encounter with the nascent religions of India, a readiness to discern values in them and to minister to the intellectual and religious aspirations of those involved in this renaissance.²³

But, as Robin Thomson, an expatriate staff member at Union Biblical Seminary notes, there continued the references to "the ministry" and the pastor as "servant, prophet, evangelist, priest and minister – all in one man!"²⁴ The impossibility of this "omnicompetent ministry," and the need for a change of thinking on ministry were already realised and stated widely, says Thomson, who criticises the consultation as repeating the same realisation without going far enough to articulate anything new.²⁵ But Principal Samuel Amirtham of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary differed in his evaluation of this consultation, and suggested that "A new era in theological education" began with this consultation. His lament

21. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

22. See Robin Thomson, "The Crisis of Ministry in the Churches in India: A Survey of Some Recent Discussions," *TRACI Journal*, 15, December 1979, pp. 9-28.

23. *Theological Education in India*, p. 7.

24. *Ibid.*, pp 5-8, 20-23.

25. Robin Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

was that the church and theological colleges failed to give sufficient attention to the report.²⁶

The consultation saw the role of the theological colleges in the theological thinking of the church in clear terms. They were not merely "training institutions" but were seen as directly involved in the mission of the church, involving in pioneer theological thinking, stimulating the church, being "with" while yet "ahead of" the church. Such pioneer thinking at once demands an inevitable tension with traditional theological thinking, and the colleges need responsible freedom to venture into such theological pioneering. The consultation declared that

The source of theology is not traditions, but the living Christ and the Holy Spirit. Therefore there is no need to depend too much on Western theological traditions and old Church Fathers. Today, "God is calling for modern fathers, for Asian Fathers and for new theological formulations."²⁷

Interestingly there had been many laymen in the church in India who did such pioneer theological thinking (Sadhu Sundar Singh, Chakkarai, Chenchiah and MM Thomas to cite a few).²⁸ though the academically trained theological teachers and graduates were rather enslaved to Western theologies in what Boyd identified as "Latin captivity."²⁹ Trends in Indian Christian theologising have been traced by many authors in their articles occasionally published in Indian Christian journals.³⁰ A Roman Catholic writer, Antony Mookenthottam, surveys Indian Christian theological tendencies and problems arising from the meeting of

26. See Samuel Amirtham, "Some Trends in the Development of Theological Education in India," LJT, 25:3-4, July-December 1976, p. 201.

27. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 202.

28. See Robin HS Boyd, *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church: The Cultural Context of the Gospel*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

29. For information on these lay theologians, see Boyd's *Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969 and 1975; Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: CLS, 1969; MM Thomas' *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM, 1969.

30. Cf. articles on Indian Christian theologising trends; JR Chandran, "Development of Christian Theology in India: A Critical Survey," BTF, VIII:2, 1976, pp. 138-155; DG Moses, "Christ and the Indian Renaissance," RS, XVII:3, September 1970, pp. 107-114; DA Thangasamy, "Theological Pioneering in India," RS, XVII:1, March 1970, pp. 75-87; VP Thomas, "The Indian Christian Theology and its Identity," RS, XXV:3, September 1978, pp. 26-33; Dr Christopher Duraisingh's series in RS, "Indian Hyphenated Christians and Theological Reflections," XXVI:4, December 1979, "Alternate Modes of Theologising Now Prevalent in India," XXVII:2, June 1980.

Christianity with Hinduism and outlines the subtle intellectual approach of Panikkar, the pastoral concern of Amalorpavadass, the advaitic experience of Abhishiktananda, the secular humanism of MM Thomas, a Christology in an advaitic framework of Samartha and the theological endeavours of several others.³¹

Theological pioneering should also be directed, the consultation said, towards pastoral function. It should help the pastoral ministry in clarifying the meaning and implications of Christian faith. The purpose of theology is not to complicate but to communicate the faith in its context. To enhance pastoral function, courses in pastoral psychology, pastoral counselling, sociology and anthropology were proposed by the consultation. Thus, from here such courses were added to the Serampore curriculum for practical theology departments in affiliated colleges.

The consultation addressed the issue of "Theological Education of the laity...in the context of the church's mission today in India." The place of social mission in the church was identified:

Today in India the Church has the prophetic role of being an agent of social change in society and should be able to point out the "new man" in India's quest for a true and responsible humanity for its people.³²

Another emphasis of the consultation was with regard to the place of relating Christian faith in the religiously plural multifaith situation in India through building relationships with academic men of other faiths, inviting them to lecture on their faith and offering B.A. and M.A. level courses in Christian religion and Christian theology to both Christian and non-Christian laymen.

The national level development was also reflected in regional and denominational level studies, as noted above. The sixties altered the course of ministry to a considerable degree. A rationale for the multiplicity of ministries was found and training for them was emphasised.

Developments in Theological Literature

During the fifties and sixties the search in the Indian church to discover mission and self-identity within the Indian setting was promoted by ecumenical study programmes such as the Study of the Rapid Social

31. See Antony Mookenthottam, *Indian Theological Tendencies, Approaches and Problems for further Research as seen in the Works of Some Leading Indian Theologians*, Volume 21 in *Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity*, Peter Lang, 1978.

32. *Theological Education in India*, p. 18.

Change in Industrial Society.³³ The Institute for the Study of Society, Christian Literature on Social Concerns, the Bombay Follow-up Study programme of the early fifties, and their merger to form the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in 1957, and the various processes of study under the NCCI, led to much publishing and sharing of thought. Some of the leading periodicals that were developed should be identified here, since they had much impact on the church's understanding of her mission, priorities and methods and enhanced the wide acceptance of these new developments. Dr. George Mathew's analytical study on behalf of the National Study of Priorities in Theological Education is helpful in understanding the significance of these journals.³⁴

Indian Journal of Theology was published from the year 1952 as an independent journal designed to "be a medium for the expression of the best theological thought" and to "serve the Christian cause in India and in her neighbouring countries." To this end, it tried "to stimulate theological thinking in the church and to encourage every effort to re-accent and to reinterpret Christian theology in the light of the needs and problems of indigenous cultures and national heritages" of India and her neighbours. *IJT* purposed to bring the best theological thinking to the doorsteps of ministers and intelligent laymen in rural and urban areas, focusing on practical issues as well as providing a link between the Western and Eastern theological enquiry and thinking. 52% Asian and 48% Western authors contributed to *IJT*, and of the Asians only 1% were non-Indian. *IJT* had a subscription of 599 in 1979, of which 263 were foreign and only 336 Indian. Only 5 out of the 75 active and retired bishops of the CSI and CNI were among the subscribers. It remained a Protestant (83.2%), male (99%) journal, as found by George Mathew in his research.

Religion and Society. The Christian Institute for the Study of Society published a *Bulletin* from 1953 to 1956. When it merged with other groups in 1957 and formed the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, the annual bulletin was replaced by the quarterly *Religion and Society*. It had a larger Indian contribution since its first editors, PD Devandadan and MM Thomas, were committed to encouraging and enabling Indian authors to write and publish. It is not strictly a theological journal though it gave considerable space to theological issues. Wider

33. This and the other references in this paragraph are explained and discussed in the section of this book where we deal with CISRS.

34. George Mathew, "Content Analysis of Theological Journals in India," *AS*, XXVIII:4, December 1981, pp. 67-92; particularly pp. 68-73.

interest was catered to as sociological, political, economic, religious and educational concerns were addressed by the authors. 60% of its articles came from its seminar papers, 30% were solicited and 10% were unsolicited articles. In 1981 the journal was self-supporting, with 75% support coming from its 1076 subscriptions. 63% of it was Indian and 37% foreign.³⁵ This possibly is the magazine which has had most influence on the formation of relevant indigenous Indian Christian theology.

Indian Church History Review. The Church History Association of India (CHAI), which was started in 1935, published a bulletin. By 1941 the bulletin ceased and the association itself became poor and was dying in the fifties. It was revived in 1961 and the association began to publish the *Indian Church History Review* from 1967. Its aim as described in the first number was

to stimulate research in Indian church history with a view to the writing of a standard work in the history of Christianity in India....to encourage and promote a higher type of historical scholarship and to find the men who could...be...producing standard volumes of the history of the church in India.³⁶

The journal, as evaluated by a researcher, exhibited a missionary rather than a scientific historical research approach, and suffered from a Protestant domination and lack of sufficient Indian contributors.³⁷ *ICHR* had a subscription total of 350 in 1979, out of which 37% (130) were foreign and 63% (220) were Indian.

Bangalore Theological Forum was started in January 1967 by United Theological College of Bangalore for the primary purpose of publishing papers and seminar reports of its staff and students and the findings of the research studies done at the college. *BTF* intended to become "an instrument for stimulating creative thinking and research which is so vital for the church's mission in India today." Alumni also contribute articles, mostly solicited. *BTF* printed 600 copies though it only had 265 subscribers in 1979. 73% were Indian subscribers.³⁸

TRACI Journal. From those who identified themselves as evangelicals in the Evangelical Fellowship of India, mostly conservative evangelicals,

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-86.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-77.

37. See the report of a survey of the content of *ICHR* by HA Stek of Leiden University in *Exchange*, 20, April 1978, pp. 38-44.

38. See George Mathew, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-81.

there developed the *TRACI Journal*.³⁹ It was published from 1975 by the Evangelical Theological Society and Theological Research and Communication Institute; after the dissolving of the ETS, TRACI published it until 1987. It had 587 subscribers in 1979, 59% foreign and 41% Indian. Unlike other journals, it seemed to appeal more to non-Indians, which is an interesting reflection on its appeal and relevance.

Developments in the Seventies

The wider understanding of ministry that started in the sixties was enhanced in the seventies with contextual thinking and the development of structures to facilitate varied emphases. People-based theological and ministerial thinking became dominant in the seventies. For instance, with the help of CISRS the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary held a consultation in 1970 on "Cultural Orientation in Theological Education,"⁴⁰ with the concern of relating theological education and theological thinking to the culture of Tamilnadu for effective communication of the gospel. The goals formulated were

1. To create in the student an awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural context and changes that are taking place in it.
2. To enable him, in the light of his faith, to discern and to evaluate them.
3. To enable him to participate in the shaping of the ongoing process in society.
4. To enable the student to understand his faith within the context and to present Jesus Christ as the Lord who gives meaning to culture and total life.⁴¹

The Theological Education Fund at the ecumenical level took the context and the method of theology seriously, and its Manila Consultation on *Theology in Action*, 1972, and its publications *Ministry in Context*, *Learning in Context* and *Viability in Context*⁴² were influential on developments in Indian theological education. Samuel Amirtham identified two keys at this period which describe the emphasis in theological education; involvement and contextualization. Involvement in the religious, economic and cultural lives of the non-Christian neighbours, in

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-83.

40. See the report in *RS*, December 1970.

41. Quoted from Samuel Amirtham, "Some Trends in the Development of Theological Education in India," *IJT*, 25:3-4, 1976, p. 205.

42. See *Theology in Action: Report of a TEF Workshop*, Manila, 1972, General TEF/WCC, 1972; all three books were published by TEF in 1972, 74 and 75 respectively.

their political struggles and educational pursuits, were all seen as a necessary part of the mission of the church, for which preparation at seminary was essential. MM Thomas wrote that

Participation in the struggle of Asian people for a fuller human life in state, society and culture in a real partnership with men of other faiths and no faith is the only context for realising the true being of the Church exercising the Church's ministry and mission.⁴³

"Can responsible theology be 'done' anywhere but in the midst of a concrete involvement in the sufferings, conflicts and struggles of the poor and oppressed?" asked the Manila workshop on "Theology in Action," and went on to say that "weak involvement produces weak theology; cool involvement produces cool theology; hot involvement produces hot theology."⁴⁴ The demand was for theological education to develop missiological, structural, theological and pedagogical contextualization.

In 1973 the Ecumenical Christian Centre at Whitefield held a consultation on "Pastoral Ministry for Liberation," asking the question, How can a pastor be equipped to meet the challenge of our changing society, to be an agent of change rather than a protector of the *status quo*?⁴⁵ The call to the Indian church was to move on from social services to social action for a just society, for liberation of people from all kinds of oppression. This then prescribed a theological education which trains students to be at points of human struggle and aspirations.

Following the same trend was the National Study Consultation on Theological Training of the Whole Church and New Patterns of Training, held at Yeotmal by the Board of Theological Education, 1-3 November 1974. It concluded that

To do theology means to be present at the bleeding points of humanity. It means today to organise the unorganised and exploited, to enter into the area of value orientation, to strive for distributive justice, and for education for liberation. If we do this, we are at the place where we really ought to be, i.e. at the points of real needs and struggles. Being anywhere else is a betrayal of our calling.⁴⁶

43. MM Thomas, *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution*, London: SCM Press, 1966, p. 104.

44. *Theology in Action*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 and 25.

45. See *Pastoral Ministry for Liberation*, Bangalore: Ecumenical Christian Centre, 1974, p. 7.

46. See *Report of the National Study Consultation on Theological Training of the Whole Church and New Patterns of Training*, Yeotmal, 1-3 November 1974, pp. 5f.

These trends linked with the hunger for social justice that was developing within India. We take note elsewhere of the "Church and Social Justice" consultation of the CSI in 1975, and the following quest for relevance that led to the priority study both of the CSI and the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College.⁴⁷ "Ministry as primarily an agent for socio-political change, development and liberation" found great appeal among some. In the evaluative study *The Church of South India After 30 Years*, Dr. Samuel Amirtham wrote that

The perspective of pastoral ministry is increasingly understood as a ministry for justice, a ministry for the liberation of all people. This means that the pastor serves as an enabler so that the Church becomes an agent of change. The members of the church need sensitizing, based upon the word of God, to the inequalities in society...The training should include analysis of the forces in our society, so that society may be transformed to reflect better God's will for man.⁴⁸

Thus theological education in India is progressing steadily towards a mission and ministry that is holistic, incarnational and closer to the model of Christ's own mission and ministry.

During the seventies numerous organizations sprang up in India which aided the role and participation of those involved in ministerial formation, i.e., theological education, as students, and teachers.

Association of Theological Teachers in India (1978)

With the objectives of fostering "a sense of fellowship among theological teachers and to build a community of theologians and theological educators," "to look at some of the issues raised in the on-going discussions on theological education...to consider certain common matters related to the work of the theological teachers such as research, publication, etc.," and to explore together the theme of "Indian Christian Theology and Self-Identity," the Senate of Serampore College sponsored a national conference of theological teachers, at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, 5-9 June 1978. It was the first conference of its kind which broke the isolation in which theological institutions existed in India, varying in their backgrounds and ethos and isolated by their geographical

47. See *Church and Social Justice: Towards Understanding the Problem*, report of the seminar jointly organised by CSI, ITS and CISRS, September 1974 at Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore: CLS Press, 1975. Both the CSI and the BTE-SSC studies on priorities for the mission of the church and for theological education are dealt with in this book.

48. See *The Church of South India After 30 Years*, Madras: CLS, 1978, pp. 67f.

locations and their denominational and confessional backgrounds. Earlier there were very few opportunities for teachers to meet together for acquaintance and mutual sharing of their ideas and for participation in on-going discussions on theological education. At this conference the teachers decided and organised an Association of Theological Teachers in India (ATTI). The major papers and a report of the conference by Dr TV Philip, director of research studies with Senate of Serampore College, were published in *Religion and Society* of September 1978.⁴⁹

These theological teachers considered the crisis in identity that the Indian Christian church had gone through at the point of independence. The earlier dependence on the West for everything; colonial protection and missionary paternalism prevented Indian Christians from developing their own identity and proper role in Indian society. Pitamber referred to "the shame and fear which came out of the loss of support of the colonial government and the resultant confusion" about the identity of the church. TV Philip notes from the contributions of Gnana Robinson and DD Pitamber that

The question of identity is the question of our "being" – the authentic selfhood. Where there is no established identity and only a "borrowed" identity, there will not be any creativity. We will only be repeating or imitating what others have said or done. In such a situation, the theological task simply becomes a repetitive task. The inner freedom of choice is possible only where there is identity. It is at the point of our self-understanding that we are liberated and made free to be creative and relevant.⁵⁰

It is in relating theological thinking and theological education to the socio-political, economic and cultural situations that Indian Christian theology can achieve its special identity. The teachers identified that the relationship to Indian realities and the task of helping in the search for the truly human in our historical situation define the identity of Indian theology.

The national conference from its workshops made numerous recommendations to improve the quality and relevance of the relationship

49. See TV Philip, "Editorial" and "National Conference of Theological Teachers (Bangalore, June 5–9, 1978)," *RS*, XXV:3, September 1978, pp. 1f, 73–93; Gnana Robinson, "Self-Identity: A Biblical Perspective," pp. 3–14; DD Pitamber, "Wholeness of Personality and Identity," pp. 15–25; VP Thomas, "The Indian Christian Theology and its Identity," pp. 26–33; JR Chandran, "Emerging Issues in the Discussion of Third World Theologians," pp. 64–72.

50. See TV Philip's Editorial, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

and task of theological education to the mission of the church in India. We note recommendations such as the need for a closer link between the churches and theological colleges, the need for more freedom for theological colleges to experiment, the need to develop a simpler lifestyle at theological colleges, the need to economise by uniting colleges which are in close proximity, or alternatively to develop federated faculties and common programmes, the need for staff and student exchanges between institutions, the employing of staff from other Asian and African countries, the need to employ other than theologically trained teachers such as sociologists, lawyers and scientists and to have consultations with them, the need to have study/action programmes for teachers and students in conjunction with groups like the CISRS, the need to have a common theological focus of the SSC and the need to organise a teachers' association. Socio-economic studies were suggested for colleges on topics such as industrial workers, pavement dwellers, cycle-rickshaw pullers, peasants and small land owners, slums, fishermen, tribals, religious minorities, women, youth, students, children, low caste people, domestic servants and estate workers. The importance of sociology, economics and politics for relevant theological education was recognised and there was a proposal to open Departments of Peoples' Concerns in theological institutions, either as separate departments or in conjunction with the Departments of Practical Theology and Ethics. Other suggestions included seminars on various current socio-economic-political issues, inclusion of journals and periodicals dealing with socio-economic questions and revision of curricula, making necessary changes to incorporate content on socio-economic problems of contemporary society. Theological institutions began to respond to these many suggestions as we shall note from our account of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary.⁵¹

Departmental meetings gave opportunity for teachers to express their particular concerns in their fields of academic excellence, and their recommendations can be seen in TV Philip's report. "Pastoralia was the most neglected field of study," said the practical theologians, who proposed that "an association of teachers in Christian Ministry" be formed and periodic meetings held for appraisal and reviewing and bringing it up-to-date to be relevant to the present day situation. Experiments in

51. See the section on Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in this book. TTS developed its People's Movement for Women's Rights (PWMR), Domestic Workers' Project, Congregation Based Community Development Movement, Education for the Social Welfare of the Oppresses (ESWO), programmes for refugees, prisoners, lepers, prostitutes and other hurt and oppressed people.

indigenous worship, courses in Indian music, bhajans and lyrics, pastoral counselling and communication were recommended.

ATTI held triennial conferences in 1981, 84 and 87. The third conference at Jabalpur considered the theme "Theology by the People," in keeping with developments in the ecumenical movement and the Programme on Theological Education of the WCC, which held conferences on similar themes.⁵² Its newsletter circulated information on staff, their involvements and publications and thus kept teachers scattered in the sub-continent more aware of each other. The plea from ATTI for a theological focus led the Senate of Serampore College to consider the theological focus both at its meetings in 1979 and at a national consultation on the "Vision and Focus for Theological Education in India Today," 18–21 March 1987, both of which we shall consider shortly.

Association of Theologically Trained Women of India (ATTWI)

The women's desk of the Lutheran World Federation assisted in the gathering of theologically trained women of India at the Lutheran Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute at Madras in annual conferences. In the later half of the seventies, Mrs Nallathambi of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India organised these gatherings. The mutual help of this conference to theologically trained women from various places and positions led them to form the Association of Theologically Trained Women of India, in 1979, as an ecumenical body with close links with the All India Council of Christian Women (AICCW), National Christian Council and the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College. ATTWI gathers theologically trained women in its biennial conferences and encourages them to share each other's experiences of victory, sorrow and struggle in ministry.⁵³ It represents the common views and visions to the leadership of the church in India and to male-dominated theological colleges. Its president represents the concerns of ATTWI members in the AICCW and BTESSC structures as an official member of those bodies. When BTESSC set up its National Study of Priorities in Theological Education, ATTWI helped with its study of women in theological education.

52. See Samuel Amirtham and John S Pobee (eds.), *Theology by the People*, Geneva: WCC/PTE, 1988.

53. When Mrs Nallathambi, the first president, left to serve the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, the then vice-President Mrs Nalini Arles became the acting president and continued the work of ATIWI. When she left the country, Mrs. KK George of the Mar Thoma Church became the president.

Other Structures that Emerged

An **Association of Christian Theological Students (ACTS)** was formed in 1975 to bring together student representatives from all the Serampore-affiliated theological colleges for mutual understanding and voicing of their concerns. It holds national conferences annually for theological students.

Evangelical Theological Students Fellowship of India (ETSF) of the Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI) also brought together theological students in annual conferences to help them understand theological issues and perspectives from an evangelical stand point. It was organised in 1974 by VM Kattapuram of SIBS, an associate staff member of UESI, and continued by S. Arles, also of SIBS and UESI.⁵⁴ *Sophia* annually brought out the conference papers and report.

The Christian Counseling Centre of Vellore came to existence in the year 1971, and became a pioneer effort in the field of counselling.⁵⁵ Similar other structures were set up at various places, but most of them were short-lived. They offer courses to theological students, pastors and lay people as well as seminars to apply counselling principles to life situations.

The **Association of Christian Philosophers of India (ACPI)** was formed in 1975 and held annual conferences immediately after the Indian Philosophical Congress each year, at the same venue. Mostly of Roman Catholic priest-philosophers, it attempts to operate ecumenically.⁵⁶

54. The whole programme was set up during the leadership of PT Chandapilla who as the general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Students of India was keen on theological thinking. But later leadership did not continue the work among theological students with the same level of concern, and ETSF became extinct.

55. The first director was an American Methodist missionary teacher from Leonard Theological College, the Rev. Dr. Carlos Welsh. He was later followed by an Indian director, Dr. BJ Prashantham of Andhra Pradesh.

56. Roman Catholic priests Richard De Smet of De Nobili College, Pune and Varghese Manimala of Vianney College, Nidadavole were the president and secretary respectively of the ACPI.

PART FOUR

Three Decades of Developments in Theological Education in India: Mid-Fifties to Mid-Eighties

Preface to Part Four

We noted the place of "nation building" as the motivating factor behind the indigenous understanding of the mission of the church in India, and how structures were established under the National Christian Council of India to allow for necessary study, reflection and planning for the same.¹ Theological reliability and contextual relevance were carefully woven into all that was attempted. Whereas several consultations, symposia and studies were organised and the reports made available, the utility of these depended upon the clergy. There were a few keen lay Christians with theological awareness and insight who ventured to think for themselves, like those of the Rethinking Group in Madras. Rare were the educated upper middle class laymen who took active interest in the church and thought theologically of the issues facing the mission of the church in India.² It was the Christian clergy who were considered responsible for theological competence and insight. The widespread assumption and practice was that the clergy were the shepherds and the congregation of laity were the sheep to follow. This Indian situation was merely a reflection of the worldwide phenomenon of a silent laity. Recognition of this worldwide phenomenon led to the call by the 1954 Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, to train the laity.³ But until the laity were theologically aroused, the clergy were the keys to lead the church to her mission. Here the mental framework with which the clergy were equipped in their understanding of their "ministry" became the determining factor as to the way clergy responded to the challenges thrown before them by consultations and reports. Theological education as available at this time in independent

1. This was dealt with in an earlier chapter.

2. See the section on laity in RD Paul, *The First Decade, An Account of the Church of South India*, Madras: CLS, 1958, pp. 175ff.

3. This is dealt with in the thesis of Bishop Pothirajulu of Madurai Diocese of the CSI, earlier lecturer at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary. See David Pothirajula, "An Educational Model of Social Self-Actualization with Strategies of Adult Laity Formation and Ministry in the Church of South India," Ph. D. Thesis, Boston University, 1978, pp. 313. Cf. The Official Report of the Second Assembly of WCC at Evanston, 1954.

India was criticised as bound to a Western mould. It still operated with a "pattern of ministry" which was Western. To quote Bishop John W Sadiq, "It is true that the pattern of the ministry in India is far too Western.... Far too much is made of academic degrees and the status of the minister." The Lindsay and Ranson reports encouraged indigenous patterns of ministry. The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and similar attempts of the NCCI promoted active lay participation. This is revealed in the list of participants at the various consultations in connection with the Bombay follow-up study of rapid social change, during the fifties, the reports of which are summarised in *Christian Participation in Nation Building*.⁵ Nevertheless, situations remained the same. The next period added more degree-orientedness, with the addition of post-graduate studies made available in select Serampore colleges. All Indian education was degree-oriented, and this was reinforced by the fact that the salary one received was based on one's academic achievements, and one's salary determined his social status.⁶ Degree or no degree, what went into the theological curriculum and syllabus of the courses had direct bearing upon the shape of ministry that the clergy would eventually offer to the church. Hence, an analysis of continuing developments in the theological colleges and the contemporary understandings of what is involved in "ministry" and in "mission" becomes important for our study. Simultaneously, the place and significance of the laity in the "ministry" and "mission" is relevant to our discussion.

Hence we need to further analyse the following strands of this interconnected story in the history of the Indian Protestant church, covering the post-independence decades: a) developments in theological education (the colleges, the curricula, the focus); b) the contextual understanding of theology (the purpose and mission of the church); and c) avenues of involvement procured for the laity (the structures of mission).

4. See John W Sadiq, "The Future of the Theological Education Fund," p. 3, an unpublished document in TEF Archives, WCC, Geneva.

5. See PD Devanandan and MM Thomas (eds.), Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1960.

6. See Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry: A Study of the Work of Theological Education Fund*, Madras: CLS for PTE/WCC, p. 104; she quotes from the reports and comments of the advisory group on the future of the Theological Education Fund, TEF Archives, WCC, Geneva, p. 12.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Harrison Report on Theological Education in India: After Ten Years

The Meeting

The Ranson report gave guidelines for the activities of the Theological Education Committee of the NCCI during the crucial years of independence, the birth of parliamentary democracy and church union, as we noted already.¹ Though the move towards independence and democracy were foreseen in the early forties, no one in 1945 expected the religiously-based partition of India. India soon after Independence moved into close ties with other Asian countries, particularly the southern and south-eastern countries. The church reflected this Asian development through the forming of a secretariat for South-Eastern Asia, the East Asia Christian Conference, under the World Council of Churches. With the arrival of Asian students to study theology in Indian theological colleges, and with a conference on theological education for Asia held at Bangkok, the church and theological education in India, faced a new relationship and identity, the Asian identity. Church union in the Church of South India already softened the other churches to reconsider their identity, and negotiations began to develop amongst many. A sense of independence and responsibility surged, and a desire to support the church was aroused.

The national population grew enormously and was 36,19,34,581 in 1951. The Christian population reached a total of 82,00,000, with almost equal portions belonging to the Roman Catholic/Orthodox and Protestant traditions. More than half of this number was found just in states known at that time as Madras, Travancore and Cochin. Industrialization took more and more people from the villages into the cities. At the time of the Ranson study in 1941 there were roughly 3,000 Christian ministers for 40,00,000 Protestant Christians, an average of one minister for every 1,333 Christians. Taking one minister to a thousand Christians as a norm,

1. We considered the Ranson report already. The setting is described in MH Harrison, *After Ten Years: An Account of Theological Education in India*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1957, pp. 5 ff.

this meant a shortage of a thousand ministers. It became worse in 1949 as the shortage was calculated at 1,174. Tirunelveli diocese had a shortage of ministers; twenty out of one hundred pulpits were vacant. At Poona, on an average ten ministers were needed annually and only six were available. The Principal of North India United Theological College at Saharanpur wrote that there were more vacant pulpits in the United Church of North India than ever before. At Trivandrum, 65 ministers were available where 80 were needed. Hence the question of using unpaid part-time workers was increasingly debated. All these provided the setting wherein Indian theological colleges and schools had the task of training Christian ministry.

The Harrison Report on Theological Education in India

After seven years of working with guidelines set in the Ranson report, the NCC committee decided in December 1952 that it was time to re-study the problems and progress of Indian theological education. A sub-committee was appointed to see how far the recommendations of the Ranson report had been carried out, and whether there was need for a new emphasis in theological education in the light of the new situations within Indian democracy. The procedure of the study, its findings and recommendations were compiled together by MH Harrison in his *After Ten Years: A Report on Theological Education in India*.² This report was presented to the Board of Theological Education of the National Christian Council of India on 14 December 1956 at Nagpur. In the questionnaire³ used to collect the needed data, new situations in terms of the problem of language and the question of an unpaid ministry were given particular attention.

Implications for Theological Education of Changing Language Policy

A linguistic scholar, Suniti Kumar Chatterji⁴ of Calcutta University, described the languages and linguistic problem⁵ in India. There are

2. *Ibid.* The sub-committee consisted of Dr. CE Abraham, Rev. Dr. Devaprasad, Dr. MH Harper, Rev. B Pradhan, Rev. W Scopes, Dr. RW Scott and Dr. MH Harrison. Originally Scott, the convenor of the committee, was expected to write the report, but since he was going on furlough, Harrison was asked to do it with the help of CE Abraham, W Scopes and others.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-63.

4. Suniti K Chatterji was the Khaira Professor of Indian Linguistics and Phonetics in the University of Calcutta. He was a government of India linguistic scholar in Europe (1919-1922), where he studied in London and Paris. His works include *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (1926) and *Indo-Aryan and Hindi* (1942). He is a well-known prose writer in Bengali.

5. London: OUP, 1943, pp. 32.

fourteen major or literary languages among the 178 languages of India.⁶ Ten of these are Aryan (Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri) and four Dravidian (Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam) in origin. Hindi was considered the real *lingu Indica* since, as Chatterji puts it, it is understood in most of India, mainly in North and also in cities of the South. After the Moghul invasion and conquest, Hindi and Urdu became rival languages of the Hindus and Muslims. The British empire introduced English education, and English became the dominant official and administrative language of the empire. It also became the most important second language to the various language groups of India. The need for a pan-Indian "national language," as "an Indian speech, understood and usable by the largest number, as a symbol and expression of the unity of the Indian state" was felt a necessity by the people.⁷ Since Sanskrit was unacceptable to Muslims, and since there was a division between Hindus and Muslims in their preference for High Hindi and Urdu, Hindustani was proposed by the Congress. After the 1947 partition based on religion, Article 343 of the Indian Constitution stated that "The Official language of the Union shall be Hindi in the Devanagiri script" from 1 January 1950. It went on to permit English to continue with a time limit of fifteen years, after which English was to become a subsidiary language, and Hindi the sole official language on 25 January 1965. Yet, in contrast, Article 345 stated in "permissive language" that a "Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language...to be used for all or any of the purposes of that State." It appeared that English could continue to be used, but the pro-Hindi bias was clear in the rest of the articles.⁸ For instance, Article 344 stated that

It shall be the duty of the [Official Language] Commission to make recommendations to the President as to:-

- a. the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union;
- b. restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the union....
- c. the preparation of a time-schedule according to which and the manner in which Hindi may gradually replace English as Official

6. There are also 544 dialects of India according to the *Linguistic Survey of India*, quoted by Chatterji, *ibid.*, pp. 2 and 4.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

8. See S Mohan Kumaramangalam, *India's Language Crisis: An Introductory Study*, Madras: New Century Book House, April 1965, pp. 29 ff.

language of the Union and as a language for communication between the Union and State Government and between one state government and another.⁹

South Indian Dravidians, especially the Tamils, reacted against the "imposition of Hindi," which they held was less developed than Tamil. Going a bit beyond the fifties into the next decade, note that in the year 1965 (when Hindi was to become the sole official national language) there arose widespread public unrest. The author, who then was completing high school, remembers the student protest marches and the boycott of Hindi lessons in which he participated. The unrest continued through the decade with large-scale agitations and police firings in which at least seventy were reported dead. A three-language formula was opted for at the end, wherein one's own mother tongue, Hindi and English (and in the case of those whose mother tongue was Hindi, Hindi, English and another Indian language) were to be studied by everyone.¹⁰ Hindi remains the national language, though English is still in wide use.

In the middle of the fifties the sub-committee set by the NCCI Theological Education Committee faced the question of the official language with concern. Though the Lindsay and Ranson reports favoured vernacular theological education, in the fifties English was still widely used for theological education, particularly at B.D. level and at the Masters level. The higher theological education department of Serampore College and the United Theological College of Bangalore both set their pattern of English education in 1910, and remained largely unaffected by the language problem.¹¹ The national literacy level had improved only to 20% in 1951 from 6.9% in 1931 and 12.2% in 1941. It was higher in the South where more than half the Christian population lived, and was 50% in the Travancore area in 1951. Education was on the rise. Theological education of the ministry needed to be of a higher standard for the educated. Hence the L.Th. level training of the nineteenth century was developed to B.D. level training after 1910, and was furthered with a B.D. Honours programme, later named Master of Theology degree. Such higher degrees were offered in English medium. Use of English for

9. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 34f.

10. Opposition parties in India used the opportunity to align themselves with popular trends in parts of the country in fighting against the official language policy. See the reaction of the Communist Party, and its views favouring a three language formula, in *ibid.*, appendix 1, pp. 113-116.

11. See MH Harrison, "Notes on the History of Protestant Theological Education in India," *Fifty Years of Service, 1910-1960*, Golden Jubilee Volume, Bangalore: UTC, 1960, pp. 25-27.

theological higher education was defended by pointing out that the naming of Hindi as the national language had not affected the English-medium education in government colleges of law and medicine. But the standard of English among students was affected by the changes. The introduction of vernacular education at primary and secondary levels, with Hindi as an optional subject and English as a subsidiary subject at the secondary level, with only few subjects taught in English medium at the high school level, resulted in making it difficult for even B.A. graduates to read and adequately comprehend theological books written in English.¹² Hence English was taught as a required subject in theological colleges, and the English emphasis for theological education continued. Though most theological seminaries and Bible schools taught in the regional languages, their libraries were full of English books, with hardly a shelf or two of vernacular books. The report exclaims, "what a poor assortment of books in the language of the area...usually little more than a shelf or two of meagre pamphlets."¹³ It notes that

It is doubtless true that theological literature in the regional languages adequate for teaching purposes does not yet exist, but one would have expected to find at least the tools for systematic study, grammars, dictionaries, editions of the classics of the language, etc.¹⁴

Not only were they not found, but even what was found on the shelves was not selected with sensitivity to students' ability to read and understand. "New books were frequently selected with a view rather to the needs of the staff."

Hence it would be fair to conclude that vernacular education had not progressed a great deal after the Ranson report. The Harrison report also did not contribute a great deal to this, but it proposed the importance of forming regional united theological schools, with better facilities in terms of buildings, library books and better qualified staff with Serampore M.Th. or equivalent degrees. No adequate vernacular emphasis was made except for its recommendation that

In view of the fact that English is no longer the medium of instruction in most high schools in India, and, further, in view of the great importance of this language for theological education as possessing a far greater wealth of Christian literature than any of the other languages of India at present, that, while the medium of instruction in the schools should be the regional language, increased attention

12. See *After Ten Years*, pp. 8f.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

14. *Ibid.*

be given to the study of English with the explicit purpose of enabling the students to read and profit from elementary theological books written in English.¹⁵

Or in other words, as long as there were insufficient number of vernacular theological books, English should continue as the language for theological education.

Its positive contribution in this regard is to be noted in its recommendations on libraries and literature. While accepting that a certain proportion of the available budget may be spent on books primarily meant for the use of staff, it recommended that libraries should be equipped with

- i. all available Christian literature in the regional language;
- ii. literary and religious classics of the regional language, together with all the necessary tools, such as grammars, dictionaries, etc. for their study;
- iii. essential theological books of an elementary character in English.¹⁶

It also envisioned the production of vernacular Christian literature. Already the *Christian Students Library* had been established to produce the basic textbooks for Indian theological education in English.¹⁷ The Harrison report further recommended that "urgent steps" should be taken "as rapidly as possible" to write, translate and publish the volumes of the Christian Students Library into the main languages of India.

The Harrison report's emphasis was timely. Soon the CSL series of books along with publications from CISRS and CLS were to provide an increasing wealth of Christian literature in India, mostly in English. It was only a decade later with grants from the Theological Education Fund to the Board of Theological Education that the vernacular textbook programme got off the ground. This we shall consider when discussing TEF. Vernacular Theological Education became a reality at higher levels in the next decades as regional united colleges emerged in the form of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Andhra Christian Theological College, etc.

The Recruitment of an Unpaid Ministry

The Ranson report confined its focus on the training of ordinands: the

15. *Ibid.*, p. 51; Recommendation B:8.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 52; Recommendation E:14.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 53; Recommendation F:24. The Christian Students Library was established after the Poona Conference of 1942 to promote the writing and publishing of books that were needed in the theological development of the church in India. See *Our Theological Task*.

Christian minister in India. Ranson indicated that "There remain, however, three main groups of workers whose service is of high importance to the church in the discharge of its pastoral and evangelistic task," full-time lay workers, women workers and voluntary lay workers.¹⁸ That there were four times more full-time lay workers, and that the development of more voluntary lay workers was the "only hope for the firm planting and growth of the Church in village communities"¹⁹ was recognised by his report; but concern for their training was omitted as outside the limits of his study, since the NCCI already had W Scopes write a book on that subject.²⁰

The Harrison study raised the following questions in order to study the existing situation of the place and training of voluntary lay workers and wives:

1. Are there any courses and facilities for the training of voluntary workers a.) for urban areas? b.) for village areas?
2. Do you know of any plan by the churches in the area to ordain voluntary village elders after training?
3. Is it advisable to combine this training with the traditional work of theological institutions, e.g. for full-time workers, ordained and unordained?
4. What are the special facilities for the training of wives of those full-time workers a. Who will be later ordained? b. Who will remain unordained?²¹

But neither in the summary section nor in the recommendations can one find any strong proposal. There was no large-scale lay training programme at the colleges and regional schools, except for the one year long course for well educated laity, college lecturers and high school teachers and such, the Diploma in Religious Knowledge course, the YMCA secretaries training at UTC, much in link with the B.D. course of study, the general wives' courses at most institutions and the special

18. See CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, p. 27.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 28; similar sentiments were expressed at the Tambaram Conference of the IMC in 1938. Training of lay leaders was carried on in various parts of India.

20. See Wilfred Scopes, "The Training of Voluntary Lay Leaders," *NCCR*, February 1944, and his book *Training Voluntary Workers in the Service of the Christian Church in India*, Lucknow: LPH for NCCI, 1955. Cf. *Christian Minister*, p. 27.

21. See *After Ten Years*, p. 60.

one-year course at Christa Seva Vidyalyaya for women workers. Theological colleges primarily trained students for ordained ministry. It was more the theological schools and Bible institutes which trained non-ordinands. But neither theological colleges nor Bible schools were aiming to train unpaid full-time workers.

Such a category of workers called "unpaid full-time workers" did not exist in India. There are those who "live by faith" in similar ways as the faith mission missionaries. They are unpaid in the sense that there is no fixed salary from a particular source. But they are in receipt of gifts and support monies from several sources "as the Lord supplies" (as they would say). What really exists is "unpaid voluntary workers," a large category in the church in India. They are not what is called full-time workers, but are part-time volunteers who are employed elsewhere, mostly in secular jobs. They earn their own livelihood and are giving their free time to serve the church. It is the training of such that is relevant to our discussion here.

During the fifties this concept of "unpaid volunteer part-time workers" was popular in the church in India. We shall take one example to help our understanding of this concept and its relationship to the theological education that the Harrison report discusses. Our example comes from the then newly-formed Church of South India. There was a great emphasis within the Church of South India on the need and role of the full-time and part-time, unordained and unpaid lay workers.²² The emphasis here was on the term "lay" and "laity." The CSI as a democratic church let ordinary lay people play a large part in its administration, as it recognised that the laity are the Church and that only if the laity are fully alive to their Christian responsibility and wholeheartedly participate in the work and the mission of the Church, can the Church effectively fulfil its function in the world.²³

Laity serve in the employ of the CSI as whole-time evangelists, catechists, teachers, doctors, nurses, secretaries and treasurers of administrative bodies, clerks, accountants, rural workers, wardens, etc. in a paid capacity; and as members of the synod, diocesan councils and diocesan courts in an unpaid capacity. Whereas 4,280 were in such paid employ, there were in the mid-fifties 3,118 lay preachers and 8,105 lay deacons, elders and voluntary workers in the CSI. The training of the laity, as well as the rest who in their own secular settings of their

22. See RD Paul, "The Laity and the Church" in his *The First Decade: An Account of the Church of South India*, Madras: CLS, 1958, pp. 175 ff.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

employment were expected to represent the gospel, was increasingly felt as a priority in the Church of South India. But with the concepts of ministry imbibed from the missionary era, the ordained ministry was often held in such high esteem that there was a preoccupation with its training to the neglect of the training of the laity.²⁴ Here the Indian church faced the need to develop her own understanding of ministry; the place of the clergy, episcopal ordination, the meaning of ordination, its relation to sacramental and liturgical ministry, the place of the laity, the ordination of elders, the sexual identity of the Christian in relation to ministry, etc. In 1950, a special committee under the convenership of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin studied the whole matter of the ministry of laity and reported to the synod executive committee, saying that "the time is ripe...to encourage, train and organise volunteer workers for the preaching and pastoral work of the Church." Volunteer pastoral workers were tried out in many dioceses; diocesan committees were developed to be in-charge of the training and supervision of such workers. Newbigin presented his classic statement *The Ministry of the Church: Ordained and Unordained, Paid and Unpaid*,²⁵ to the executive committee in March 1953. He thought of training the volunteer village lay-workers with a view to ordaining them as honorary presbyters and deacons, in order that they could help the pastor in sacramental and liturgical ministry. The fourth synod, with its main theme "A New Pattern for the Church," concerned itself with the use of voluntary workers as a new pattern for the church. It recognised that the fully paid ministry was inadequate to cope with the enormous amount of pastoral work that had to be done in the church's growing congregations. Some pastors were responsible for pastorates with 20 or more village congregations and some had three or four town congregations.²⁶

The Rev. Devapragasam of Madurai diocese, convenor of the synod committee on volunteer workers, presented the committee's proposal to

24. See S. Arles, "Problems Faced in Theological Education," *TRACI Journal*, no. 20, September 1981, pp. 14-19; specially pp. 16f.

25. See "Appendix III: Statement on the Ministry of the Church - Ordained and Unordained, Paid and Unpaid," in RD Paul, *The First Decade*, op. cit., pp 253-257. The same was later published as a booklet by Edinburgh House Press, London.

26. Newbigin in his report refers to how it took 20 or more village congregations to support a full-time clergyman, *ibid.*, p. 254. The situation is continued even three decades later, as illustrated in the article by V Devasahayam, "Rethinking the Diaconal Present," *Madras Diocesan News and Notes*, 17:12, February 1983, pp. 6-30.

train three levels of volunteer workers; those with only elementary education, those with secondary education and those with higher education. A scheme of training for each of the categories through retreats and week-end conferences, and a licensing of lay preachers, were all proposed and accepted. The fifth synod in 1956 reaffirmed the above procedures and placed further emphasis on training highly educated laity for voluntary work in the church.²⁷ A short term study at a theological institute was considered viable for those who needed or desired further academic learning.²⁸ Such a trend in the CSI, to ordain laymen in secular employment as unpaid, honorary deacons to assist in the sacramental ministry of the church, was a departure from what was imbibed from earlier missionary period. It already revolutionised the church's understanding of ministry and gave emphasis to the Protestant view of the priesthood of all believers. The trend continued to be strengthened through the following decades.

A problem with this development was that while it took seriously the involvement of laity in the work of the church and interpreted all the ways laity could help the existing church from within, it failed to address the vital concern of training the laity for their involvement in society where they were employed, worked and lived. That is where they should fulfil the mission of the church. The distinction between the work of the church and the mission of the church to the world was confused in the CSI constitution and in its section on the ministry of the laity. Correctives did come later, through the wider theologising of NCC related structures.²⁹ The CSI itself later took the mission of the church seriously, and interpreted it in relation to the wider world, helped by the world-ward journey of the ecumenical movement and its missions in the sixties.³⁰

The above analysis indicates how concern for the training of the laity as volunteer workers was taken up by the churches. This explains why

27. See *The First Decade*, pp. 180-f.

28. The synod also discussed the use of summer schools, lay-leaders' institutes, professional workers' fellowships etc.; *ibid.*, p. 181.

29. RD Paul openly admitted and evaluated this confusion in the Constitution *ibid.*, pp. 184-189. The NCC structures that helped are the CISS, CLSC, Bombay Follow-up study and the CISRS.

30. After the 1961 merger of the IMC and WCC, with an increased third world leadership in the World Council, the interpretations of mission became more context-oriented, and world events began to set the agenda for Christian mission priorities. The WCC fourth assembly (Uppsala 1968) and the CWME conference of 1972 Bangkok were seen as the world-ward journey of the ecumenical movement by critics. It was an incarnational world-ward journey and a necessary one, as later history would reveal.

the theological education committee did not give much attention to it in the Harrison study. Even later, the involvement of theological institutions in lay training was mainly through the availability of their faculty members as guest teachers at retreats and conferences of the laity and through incentives given to their students to train and use laity. Only after the mid-sixties do we notice the arrival of the concept of theological education by extension,³¹ an increase of lay interest in external theological studies³² and an upsurge in consultations on and for the laity.³³ Internal study programmes at theological colleges and seminaries remain for the training of the full-time paid ministry of the churches. Theological colleges and seminaries are not in the process of recruiting voluntary unpaid workers, but promote the paid full-time worker model. In the Indian setting, one who had trained at a theological college would be considered a "drop-out" if he were to enter any field or mode of service other than paid full-time ministry of some kind.

Co-operation in Theological Education: The Ranson Proposal

The Ranson Report noted how the Lindsay, Pickett and Butterfield reports were made less effective due to lack of sufficient co-operation between the many church groups in India.³⁴ In spite of the efforts of the NCC, the American, Continental and British "strands of western religious tradition superimposed upon the fabric of the indigenous Church" proved the basis of the non-co-operation experienced between various churches. Within the field of theological education, the Serampore Charter was a great unifying force; yet the differences between the American and non-American approaches caused divergence. The American educational method tended to be more flexible, with "Projects, the credit system, a certain fluidity in the syllabus, a wide range of 'options' and a general

31. Theological education by extension will be discussed later in this book.

32. The Harrison Report indicates that whereas between 1914-1944, in three decades, there were 67 B.D. and 30 L.Th. external students, just in the next twelve years there were 42 and 25 respectively. See the table in *After Ten Years*, p. 34. In his account for 1965-1986, the registrar of the Senate of Serampore College, the Rev DS Sathyanarjan, indicates this increase. In 1986 there were 264 external B.D. students compared to only 228 in the internal programme. For B.Th. the figures were 160 external and 278 internal. See his "Sharing of and Planning for Resources: A Survey (Theological Education in India)," *AJT*, 2:1, 1988, pp. 53-64, specially pp. 60f.

33. UTC sponsored a consultation and published its report *Training the Laity*, Bangalore: UTC, 1968. A useful work in lay involvement is DA Thangasamy's *Towards Involvement: The Theory and Practice of Lay Education*, Madras: CLS, 1972.

34. See *Christian Minister in India*, pp. 166-168.

emphasis on functional training," compared with European education which was "more 'academic' and less elastic," with a general emphasis on *didache* rather than *episteme*. Each had a valuable contribution to theological education in India. But it was as they willingly co-operated that mutual learning could take shape. Separate or divergent developments could only make for duplication and wasteful overlapping. The Ranson report, hence, proposed a plan of co-operation through the three methods of the unitary institution, the system of denominational halls or hostels with a common teaching faculty, and groups of federated institutions in close proximity to make common instruction possible in subjects mutually agreed upon.³⁶ Co-operation was to be seen in the formation of regional theological schools, the strengthening of union theological colleges and the setting up of schemes for advanced study and theological research. What was proposed was that there be formed "One united theological school in each main language area of the country organised on the widest possible basis of co-operation;" and that the existing five B.D., level colleges be strengthened without planning anymore new colleges. Further study for faculty development was given priority both inside India and abroad, with encouragement for research and writing, wherein a co-operative effort on the part of all the various denominations and traditions would converge to strengthen the programme.

Statistical Data on Theological Institutions as in 1956³⁷

In 1956 the following were the theological colleges and schools that were functioning in India. Those affiliated to Serampore are indicated with an S, and the total number of staff and students in each college for 1956 is given:

The five B.D. level colleges were:

College	staff/students
1.(S) United Theological College, Bangalore	14/53
2.(S) Bishop's College, Calcutta	4/24
3.(S) Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur	21/95
4.(S) Gurukul Theological College and Research Institute	4/18
5.(S) Serampore College, Serampore	8/28
(Union Biblical Seminary, Yeotmal was started in 1953)	16/75

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 176f and 167.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-186.

37. The statistical information here is taken from the Harrison Report, *After Ten Years*, pp. 16ff.

The regional union theological schools teaching in vernacular were:

College	Language	staff/students
1.(S) Gujarat United School of Theology, Ahmedabad	(Gujarati)	4/12
2. United Theological School, Calcutta	(Bengali)	5/7
3.(S) Andhra Union Theological College, Dornakal	(Telugu)	8/43
4.(S) Union Theological College, Indore	(Hindi)	5/16
5.(S) United Theol. College of Western India, Poona	(Marathi)	10/31
6.(S) Tamilnad Theological College, Tirumaraiyur	(Tamil)	9/54
7.(S) Kerala United Theological Seminary, Trivandrum	(Malayalam)	8/21
8.(S) Union Kanarese Seminary, Tumkur	(Kannada)	6/13

Other Institutions (theological schools) during this period:

1. Allahabad Bible Seminary, Allahabad	8/27
2. Southern Asia Bible Institute, Bangalore	9/33
3. South India Bible Institute, Bangarapet	11/50
4.(S) Union Theological Seminary, Bareilly	11/34
5. Santal Theological Seminary, Benegaria	7/39
6.(S) Theological College, Cherrapunji	6/14
7. Theological College, Cuttack	6/24
8. Karnataka Bible Seminary, Gadag	4/25
9. Assam Baptist Theological Seminary, Jorhat	15/64
10.(S) Baptist Theological Seminary, Kakinada	13/45
11. Theological Seminary, Kotapud	9/84
12.(S) Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam	5/9
13. Hindustan Bible Institute, Madras	3/13
14. Madras Bible Seminary, Madras	5/13
15.(S) Basel Mission Theological Seminary, Mangalore	8/14
16.(S) Lutheran Theological College, Rajahmundry	12/159
17. Baptist Theological Seminary, Ramapatnam	7/107
18.(S) Lutheran Theological College, Ranchi	3/30
19.(S) North India United Theological College, Saharanpur	12/23
20. T.E.L.C. Divinity School, Tranquebar	5/20

Specialized Institutions were:

- Henry Martyn School of Islamics, Aligarh
- Christu Seva Vidyalaya, Madras (for women workers)
- Gurukul Lutheran Research Institute, Madras
- Centre for Research and Training (no location decided) and
- Post-B.D. studies at Serampore, Bangalore and Jabalpur

Fluctuation is noticed in the recording of the number of theological institutions between the Ranson and Harrison studies; but an overall 33.3%

increase through the addition of 9 schools is reported with certainty. The number of theological teachers more than doubled during this period from 134 to 282. Most of the increase was in the "other" schools, as they grew 184% (from 56 to 159), whereas regional schools grew by a small 24% (from 45 to 56) and continued to suffer from inadequate staffing. Indian staff remained at 57%, though it decreased from 58% to 40% in the colleges and from 62% to 59% in the regional theological schools but increased from 52% to 63% in the "other" schools. The reason for this is analysed by the report as rooted in two factors. First, the financial factor. Missionary societies which formed the larger mainline church groups and connected theological colleges and schools were able to give their Western personnel more easily than giving funds. Since "payment of salaries makes up a considerable part of the total cost of theological education," the colleges and regional schools were not in a position to employ more Indian staff, but relied on expatriate teachers. But the "other" schools of the new missions had more finances available for their work and employed more Indian staff.³⁹ The second factor was the qualification of staff. The "other" schools were often employing less qualified staff (even without a B.D. degree) for teaching their courses as they did not have to measure up to an accrediting authority or standards.⁴⁰ But the regional schools and colleges, affiliated to Serampore, were under

38. *Ibid.*, p. 24. The Ranson report considered 27 institutions of various grades; the NCC survey of 1954 listed 39; the *Christian Handbook for 1954-55* listed 37 and the sub-committee now noted 36. The additional nine schools were: Union Biblical Seminary replacing the Bible Training College of Yeotmal; Hindustan Bible Institute, Southern Asia Bible Institute, Madras Bible Seminary, Karnataka Bible Seminary, Allahabad Bible Seminary, Basel Mission Theological Seminary, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary and Kotapud Theological Seminary.

39. Three of the new schools belonged to one holiness mission from the USA, the Oriental Missionary Society; Madras, Gadag, and Allahabad seminaries. The finance to support workers was raised in the West, saying that a missionary twenty dollars a month could employ a Christian worker in India. What it amounted to was cheap labour, where the Christian worker adapted to a frugal lifestyle and often went without the basic necessities. Justice in terms of salary was not a concern in this circle. Hence they were able to acquire more staff easily. We should also refer here to the protest against the salary difference between Western and Indian staff at UTC that Devanandan raised.

40. At the Bible schools, often staff included theologically qualified missionaries as well as their wives, who had neither a B.A., nor nursing skill nor teacher training with a Bible school short term course. They too taught along with their husbands. At times Indian senior pastors who did not pursue higher education were involved in teaching at their denominational schools.

restrictions as to the type of qualifications for their staff. This again meant the non-availability of qualified Indian staff for the colleges and regional schools. After the Ranson study, there were more opportunities for post-graduate studies available to Indian teachers. But this was still at the beginning stages in the fifties, and even those who availed themselves of the opportunity of higher education frequently faced other urgent calls than theological education, as Indian leadership was sought after in every realm of the churches' life as well as in the nation.

Types of Courses Offered and Their Aim

Predominantly the courses were geared towards ordinands. A Licentiate in Theology (L.Th.) diploma course was offered with the intention "to provide a well rounded course of Biblical and theological study designed for the proper equipment of the ministry of the Church."⁴¹

With matriculation as the standard of entrance, it was similar to university degree courses, extending to three or four years, covering 29 papers and much personal guidance and instruction. Courses were taught in regional languages to equip students to minister to their own people. On the contrary, Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree course trained university graduates "for certain essential functions of the Church," in academic style, using English medium, since much theological literature was not yet available in the vernacular. The B.D. was not considered a higher degree than the L.Th., but as distinctly for other than pastoral ministry.⁴² Post-B.D. study was available at Serampore, Bangalore and Jabalpur. A Master of Theology course replaced B.D. Honours courses, and a Doctor of Divinity programme was developed after the Ranson report. Non-ordinands were provided with specialised courses in particular centres. Bangalore offered training for YMCA secretaries and college and high school teachers, giving some separate courses but mostly the same classes as for B.D. students. A Diploma in Religious Knowledge course was also offered from Serampore through affiliated colleges. The aim was to strengthen educated laymen in their theological knowledge to give leadership while yet in secular employment and in non-ordained roles of leadership in the church's institutions. Wives of students also were given special courses at most institutions, and at the time of the Harrison study 307 were enrolled in such courses. Christa Seva Vidyalaya, located on the campus of Women's Christian College, Madras, offered a "one year's intensive course of training to highly qualified women

41. See Serampore Senate Minutes, Book No. II, pp. 816f for the "Resolution X: The Nature of the L.Th. Course," quoted in *After Ten Years*, pp. 28f.

42. See *ibid.*, pp. 29-30, for "Resolution XII: The Nature of the B. D. Degree."

in fitting them for responsible leadership in Christian work."⁴³

Developments in Co-operation after the Ranson Report

The Harrison report tried to study whether the Ranson proposals were found suitable, whether carried out or modified or rejected. Harrison summarised the questionnaire returns and views gathered from his brief visits to a few colleges and schools. He remarked that this study was limited, and there was need for further future studies. Attention was paid to the strengthening of regional schools in the Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu areas. Co-operation between the mainline churches, meaning the older churches which had been at work from the Great Century, was on the increase. But they had been outnumbered by the new missions and churches which arrived in more recent decades and operated as denominational schools. Whereas the regional schools increased 33.3% in the twelve years between 1945-1956 and reached an enrolment of 206 students, the new mission schools doubled their ranks to an intake of 627 students. While some regional schools maintained higher standards than the denominational schools in their areas, others suffered a loss of standard by accommodating lesser able students sent by a co-operating body whose funds they could not risk losing. Particular notice is taken of the Tamil, Marathi and Gujarati areas as more successful in carrying out the Ranson plan. Though regional schools existed in Malayalam and Hindi areas, plans of union did not succeed. The Telugu regional school was overshadowed by denominational schools, and a disappointing dispersion of effort was seen in Kannada area, as three English-medium schools (namely the South India Bible Institute of Bangarapet, Southern Asia Bible Institute and United Theological College of Bangalore) and three Kannada medium schools (the Basel Mission Theological Seminary at Mangalore, Karnataka Bible Seminary at Gadag and Union Kanarese Seminary at Tumkur) serve the small Christian community. In the Bengali region efforts remained at early stages.⁴⁴

Hindrances to Co-operation

Denominational differences, theological variations and national traditions in terms of theological education obtaining among British

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 27f. Christa Seva Vidyalaya serves women of various CSI and Lutheran churches and offers a one year certificate course covering subjects Bible, leadership, preaching and practical theology. Those wishing to further their education enroll for the Diploma in Religious Knowledge with Saranpore University.

44. *After Ten Years*, pp. 44f.

Continental and American missions and churches caused continued separation in the fifties, as in the pre-Independence period. Indian nationals were not responsible for this dividedness. Denominational seminaries found it hard to consider uniting with others before church union, though there was a vivid example of the possibility in the history of the United Theological College at Bangalore, which served the Presbyterian, American Reformed, Congregational and Methodist Churches from 1910, and much later included Anglican streams from both the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Theological differences did not hinder co-operation within the existing union colleges, and hence the proposal of the Ranson report on "denomination halls" never became necessary. With the increase of Indian leadership, staff and resources, the enormous importance of Western traditions began to decrease and an openness to learn from one another beyond barriers developed in due course among those who ventured into union. Much of the continuing separation stemmed from the rigidity with which confessional distinctives were held by groups. The South India Bible Institute for example, saw itself as a holiness seminary and would co-operate with similar schools at Gadag, Madras and Allahabad, but had reservations about co-operating with even nearby Southern Asia Bible College of the Assemblies of God churches, since the Holiness Movement in the USA would not approve of speaking in unknown tongues.⁴⁵ Beyond these Western factors, there were social, cultural and regional differences within the linguistic groups in India that posed problems for co-operation. For instance, Mangalore Christians could not identify themselves with the Tumkur-Mysore Christians, though they shared the same Kannada language. At times the amount of property and funds connected to an institution hindered it from considering union with others. Differences in academic standards of staff and entrance requirements for students, too, hindered some from negotiating union.

But the Harrison report saw the continuing validity of the Ranson plan and recommended that it, if need be with alterations, be adopted by churches and theological schools. The plan was more successful with colleges which cherished their union and were strengthened in their library, campus and staff resources. But even where co-operation in terms

45. Speaking in tongues, glossalalia, is a popular practice among many Pentecostal church groups. Though the Assemblies of God is closely related to Pentecostalism, their position on tongues in the Indian setting is not rigid. They do not insist that everyone must speak in tongues as an evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holiness Movement discourages the use of tongues as evidence or even as a gift of the Spirit.

of union was not possible, staff exchange, common refresher courses and combined activities were attempted to promote co-operation.

The NCC committee did not favour an increase in the number of B.O. colleges. The only new development after the Ranson report was the formation of Union Biblical Seminary at Yeotmal in the place of the Free Methodist Bible Training College. It was sponsored by 14 different conservative evangelical missions and churches whose parent bodies, mainly in the North American setting, were suspicious of the National Council and the ecumenical movement. We shall have to take a better look at this development, its background and implications in a later chapter.⁴⁶ But for now we should note that the Harrison Report reaffirmed a sentiment expressed in the Ranson Report, that the conservative evangelical schools which did not wish to link with Serampore should identify together in some way, and that the NCCI Theological Education Committee should help them in such a process in any possible way. Conservative evangelical groups during the fifties and sixties did associate together under the leadership of Yeotmal. In the seventies, some of them followed the Union Biblical Seminary and entered into the mainstream of theological education under the Board of Theological Education and the Senate of Serampore College, whereas the more conservative among them stayed outside, and in the eighties have formed a structure of their own. Also, there were those of Wesleyan Holiness background who had a separate identity within the evangelical identity, and hence were polarised in subtle ways. Again, these issues were rooted in the denominational and confessional zeal of powerful funding structures from North America. We shall study these developments later at greater length to see their effect on the development of the theology of mission and theological education in the growing Indian democracy.

Thus, in the mid-fifties, while the NCCI put effort into encouraging co-operative developments in theological education, there grew more separatist developments among the new churches and missions which strengthened their own schools. They articulated a strict view on evangelization, devoid of the wider dimensions of missionary involvement in society, while churches in the NCCI were getting deeply involved in social consciousness in their mission thinking. Theological education reflected these differences. The fifties proved crucial in settling the two camps strongly into their own structures. To this we must turn our attention now in order to rightly understand developments in theological education in India.

46. See elsewhere in the thesis for details on the rationale behind the formation of Union Biblical Seminary.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Significance of the Evangelical Theological Institutions

At the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, when the Lindsay Commission was studying *Christian Higher Education in India*, several interdenominational faith missions and the new evangelical church missions from the West, particularly from North America, began to arrive in India. While there were several similarities in their origin, *modus operandi* and purpose in mission, they rigidly maintained their separate identities, often spelling them out as doctrinal distinctives. Yet they co-operated on matters that did not threaten their particular identities. For the purpose of our study we shall take two examples, an interdenominational faith mission and a denominational mission, both of which became significant because of their contribution to the growth and development of evangelical theological education in India. First the work of the World Gospel Mission through its South India Biblical Seminary at Bangarapet in Karnataka State, and then the work of the Free Methodist Church's mission through its Bible Training College at Yeotmal in Maharashtra State.

South India Biblical Seminary

The World Gospel Mission,¹ a holiness faith mission from the USA, responded to the plea of an ordained Methodist evangelist, the Rev Miss Anna McGhie,² "for a training centre for God-called Indian young people"³ and sent the Rev. James R Bishop⁴ to India in 1937. On 16 November

1. WGM of Marion, Indiana, USA, was earlier located at Chicago as the National Holiness Missionary Society. It is rooted in the Wesleyan Methodist churches and draws support from the "American Bible belt" holiness camp meetings and churches.

2. Anna McGhie visited China and India in the mid-thirties and was "shaken to the depths by India's superstition, poverty and idolatry." See Laura Trachsel, *Kindled Fires in Asia*, Marion, Indiana: WGM, 1960, p. 53.

3. *Ibid.*

4. For an account of the life and work of James Bishop, see Mary E Hamilton, *James R Bishop: God's Chosen Man, with the Continuing Story of South India Biblical Seminary*, Bombay: GLS for SIBS, 1988.

1937 he started the South India Bible Institute as an interdenominational school at 20, Halls Road, Kilpauk, Madras, with twelve resident and seven non-resident students.⁵ The motto of the school was "Saved to Serve". In his welcome address, Bishop expressed the policy adopted for India by WGM, which recognised that the church was already present in India in considerable strength:

Earnestly and prayerfully to cooperate with, rather than to compete with, and to supplement rather than supplant other Christian efforts in India.⁶

This was in keeping with what the Lindsay Commission had said six years earlier in 1931, though not a direct outcome of it. The Lindsay report recommended

that the authorities of the different churches reconsider their obligations in the light of the needs not of their own community only, but of the Church as a whole.⁷

WGM chose not to plant its own church or add a new denomination to the existing number, but to serve the existing churches in the country by providing training for its youth and specialising in the areas of training for pioneer missions, evangelism, Christian education and practical scriptural holiness.⁸ James Bishop set down the goals of the school as:

1. To get the young men established in a personal experience of entire sanctification....
2. To give a clear grasp of the cardinal teachings of the Bible....
3. To train in practical soul winning work.⁹

Right away SIBI developed links with various church groups as James Bishop found friendships and ministry.¹⁰ The Methodist missionaries EA Seamands, E Stanley Jones, J Waskom Pickett, Ralph King of the Emmanuel Methodist Church in Madras, Esther Shoemaker of the Ellen Thoburn Cowen Memorial Hospital in Kolar and Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Linn of Bowringpet (later Bangarapet) all played significant roles in receiving the World Gospel Mission and its teaching ministry. Within its first decade SIBI moved to several venues. November 1937 to June 1938 at 20 Halls Road, Kilpauk, Madras; July to October 1938 at 31 Main Road, Perambur.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 81.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

7. Lindsay Report on *Christian Higher Education in India*, p. 246.

8. *God's Chosen Man*, p. 85.

9. *Kindled Fires in Asia*, p. 54.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-58.

Madras; November to December 1938 at Doddaballapur near Bangalore; 1939 to June 1942 at 4 Kensington Road, Bangalore; June 1942 to 1952 at the Methodist Campus, Kolar and from August 1952 at its present and permanent location at Anandagiri, Bangarapet.¹¹ Sister Platt and Mother Eaton of the India Gospel League helped Bishop in the relocation process at Bangalore,¹² whereas the Seamands, Shoemaker and the Linns assisted at Kolar and Bangarapet. Many students were drawn from Kerala as the Metropolitan Abraham Mar Thoma¹³ of the reformed Mar Thoma Syrian Church became a friend of SIBI and had SIBI staff speak at their famous Maramon Conventions.¹⁴

In mid-forties the Ranson report referred to SIBI and said

There is a Bible Institute at Kolar, conducted and maintained by the National Holiness Mission of America. It draws many of its students from outside the Karnataka and from several denominations, and of necessity employs English as the medium of instruction. It reports four at present under training for the ordained ministry. There is a staff of six non-Indians (some part-time) but no Indian teachers.¹⁵

There were 21 other students in the 1944–45 academic year.¹⁶ The interdenominational stance drew students from the Baptist, Nazarene, Methodist and independent churches as well as from the larger

11. South India Biblical Seminary, Anandagiri, Post Box 20, Bangarapet 563114, Karnataka State, India.

12. The services of these two ladies are remembered through the naming of two of the churches of the Karnataka Central Diocese of the CSI as The Platt Memorial Church (at the mission compound) and The Eaton Memorial Church (Jayanagar).

13. The link between the Mar Thoma Church of Kerala and the WGM is seen also in the teaching ministry of Dr. & Mrs. Hollis Abbott of WGM/SIBI at the Abraham Mar Thoma Memorial Bible Institute for two years. The Mar Thoma Church has its own seminary at Kottayam, which operates at the B.D. level, and links with the Orthodox Seminary and the Kerala United Theological Seminary to make post-graduate training available. Yet many apply to other seminaries for studies, and those desiring a B.Th. level programme find SIBS attractive.

14. From the year 1900 these conventions were held in the sandy bed of the Pampa River under a mammoth *pandal* (tent) made of palm leaves. This is the largest annual gathering of Christians in India, drawing up to 100,000 people. Sadhu Sundar Singh, Thomas Walker, Sherwood Eddy, Pakenham Walsh, Stanley Jones, Paul Rees and a host of others have preached in these meetings.

15. CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, p. 117.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

denominations which soon formed the united Church of South India.¹⁷ The first Indian teachers and evangelists employed were from the Mar Thoma Church.¹⁸

When WGM built a new campus for SIBI, it planned to train 40 men and 20 women students. From 1952 to 1975 the student body fluctuated between 50 and 60. Earlier batches between 1942-55 trained either for a three year Certificate in Theology (C.Th.) diploma or a two year Christian Workers Certificate. Between 1955 and 1970 a four year Graduate in Theology (G.Th.) diploma course accredited by the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI was offered. In 1970 SIBI became South India Biblical Seminary and began to offer a Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degree accredited by the BTE of the NCCI. In 1976, keeping in line with a trend that was developing among evangelical seminaries and colleges, SIBS entered the Serampore family of colleges and was affiliated at the B.Th., level. The demand to train more and more students put pressure on the administration. Concerned for quality, they had previously turned down numerous applicants. The revival in South India through the many evangelical missionary and parachurch ministries aroused numerous young men and women to desire seminary training. This demanded a change of thought in the seminaries as to the numbers admitted. Hence, during the years between 1976 and 1986 there was a steady increase in the intake of students at SIBS, from 60 to 120.¹⁹ This period also saw the dwindling of the Western missionary presence to one couple, and the development of a totally indigenous staff and administrative leadership.²⁰ While the spiritual and evangelistic missionary emphasis attracted students already, Serampore affiliation furthered the attraction of theological education at SIBS.

SIBS grew from a faith mission whose leadership and constituency were anti-NCC, anti-WCC and opposed to the ecumenical movement in America. The American missionaries at SIBS reflected this mentality with pious sincerity. But they related to the Methodist Church in South

17. Other denominations represented include the Salvation Army, CNI, Lutheran, Pentecostal churches, Brethren, Wesleyan etc.

18. See *Kindled Fires in Asia*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

19. In mid-eighties SIBS had 25 single women students in "Chi Alpha House", 70 men students in "Philadelphia Home" and 12 married student couples in the family quarters.

20. See S. Arles, "Indigenization and Expansion of the Seventies and Eighties" in Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-158. Frank and Christine Dewey were the only foreign WGM missionaries who stayed after 1982.

Asia (MCSA), later the Methodist Church in India (MCI),²¹ as members. As they worked with students from the CSI, CNI, Mar Thoma and other churches which all were members of the NCCI and WCC, they had to adjust their views and expressions. The seminary (SIBS) and the mission (WGM) both readily aligned with the EFI in 1951 when it was formed to preserve and promote evangelical identity and togetherness. There was a very definite evangelical bias in the teaching programme. Most students were encouraged to join evangelical parachurch ministries and mission societies. But this was done without a sectarian separation from the ecumenical NCCI member churches as the seminary linked with the BTE of the NCCI and often invited the bishops of the CSI, CNI, Mar Thoma and Methodist Churches to give addresses at special occasions. Though caution was taken to invite only those dignitaries who were "evangelical" and of good report, the tenacity of the anti-WCC feelings of the supporting group in America was absent in the WGM/SIBS in India.

Though in close enough links with the central developments in theological education in India through the structures of the Board of Theological Education, the National Council of Churches of India and the Senate of Serampore College, SIBS remained autonomous as a confessional, evangelical seminary, largely American in perspective and orientation. Indigenization came about in its staff, church links and ministry, yet the roots of "the vine of his planting"²² remained firm in a particular faith mission understanding from the USA. Though it had links with men like E Stanley Jones, and had him as special guest at its Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1962, it did not link up with the type of larger vision that he represented in India through the ashram, dialogue and "Indian Road" approaches.

SIBS specialised in and contributed to the cause of Christian education,²³ mission²⁴ and evangelism.²⁵ Most of the staff of the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM), Scripture Union (SU), Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), Youth For Christ (YFC) and several mission societies were trained at SIBS.²⁶ When SIBS started its Vacation

21. The British Methodists merged into the CSI and CNI. But the American Methodists stayed separate as the MCSA and MCI, though active members of the NCCI, WCC and the ecumenical movement.

22. A promotional booklet of SIBS, KGF: Christian Literature Printers, 1974.

23. See *God's Chosen Man*, pp. 156, 164-166.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 159-163 for an account of SIBS' contribution to missions.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-174, 180-183; *Kindled Fires in Asia*, pp. 70-87.

26. Information here reflects the author's own knowledge as a staff member at SIBS, and from his interactions with senior staff.

Bible School programme²⁷ in 1952 as a summer special spiritual emphasis among children and youth, teams of SIBS students went to conduct the ten-day course in churches all over South India. The missionary content in its curriculum led to the birth of the largest missionary movement from Tamilnadu, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) in 1962.²⁸ Missionary candidates of the Indian Evangelical Mission, National Missionary Society, Church Growth Missionary Movement and India Church Growth Mission are also trained at SIBS. Through the Summer School of Evangelism, SIBS trains laymen and lay women for local church leadership in evangelism and Christian education.²⁹

In 1972 an Indian Council took over leadership for SIBS from WGM personnel. Samuel Kamaleson was the first chairman of the council from 1972 to 1976. At that time he was Pastor of the Emmanuel Methodist Church, Vepery, Madras. The SIBS council became the legal body to govern the institution. Towards the end of the seventies, the council debated the objectives of SIBS. After the Serampore affiliation in 1978, Indian members of the SIBS faculty increasingly desired to link the interdenominational SIBS to the churches in India. The second chairman of the SIBS Council, Bishop Sundar Clarke of CSI Madras diocese, was a positive influence during this period (1977–78). Since the B.D. degree was the basic degree required for pastors in the CSI and Mar Thoma Churches, the council also desired to develop SIBS into a B.D. level college. During the years 1979–80, Kenneth Gill, bishop of the Karnataka central diocese of the CSI, was SIBS council chairman. He questioned this move, and proposed that SIBS should continue its characteristic role of training workers for pioneer missionary service among the unreached, evangelists and Christian educators for local churches and parachurch ministries. The doubling of the number of students increased

27. *Kindled Fires in Asia*, pp. 88–91, *God's Chosen Man*, pp. 167–172, and the VBS Silver Jubilee Brochure, 1977.

28. VBS follow-up retreats led to the formation of prayer groups in various places in Tamilnadu. These were later patterned after the prayer bands in America that support WGM. The name "friends" has nothing to do with the Friends' denomination. SIBS claims FMPB as her grand-child through the VBS ministry.

29. The Summer School of Evangelism was a three-week long intensive course in evangelism during the month of May, which drew about 50 men and women of all ages and backgrounds, from Nagaland to Sri Lanka. The author taught in these courses and directed them at SIBS (1976–82; 87), and since many came from Sri Lanka, the course was conducted in 1982 at the Lanka Bible College campus in Peradeniya to train the Lanka Every Home Crusade evangelists.

the budget much more than the WGM contribution, which already was decreasing with the dwindling down of the number of missionaries. Older missionaries retired and returned to the USA and new ones could not obtain visas to enter the country as missionaries. Influenced by secular ideology on the one hand and majority Hindu communalism on the other, the Indian government did not allow foreign missionaries into India. Hence, largely for financial reasons and secondarily to develop a partnership among holiness missions in India, SIBS developed a new constitution to include other "holiness churches and missions"³⁰ as partners with SIBS. The Church of the Nazarene linked with SIBS in 1982 as a second partner, the first being WGM, the founding mission. Negotiations started with the Wesleyans, Free Methodists and others who were members of the India Holiness Association.³¹ This has brought a denominational pastoral training emphasis affecting the earlier interdenominationality.

The early WGM policy in India that it would train youth of the existing churches and not plant another new denomination, i.e., the purpose of "supplementing rather than supplanting" went through revision. Denominational pastoral training of Nazarene candidates became an official purpose of the seminary. The number of such denominational candidates steadily increased in the eighties. Scholarships were offered to independent candidates by the Nazarene church, with a condition that they should serve the Nazarene Church after graduation on a contract basis. Independent candidates, particularly fresh converts from Hinduism, who came with great zeal to this evangelical centre of education, were bought up by a denominational mission, to become church planters for their work in South India. This certainly caused wider confusion about the validity of the interdenominational stance of SIBS. To the question "why are there Nazarene pastors and churches in an area where already the CSI, Methodist and other churches are strong?" the answer given was that "there are still hundreds of unreached villages in the area." The

30. Holiness churches and missions linked together in the India Holiness Association, which owned the chapel at the Yeotmal Seminary campus and held an annual holiness convention to promote holiness as a doctrine. The official organ, *More Excellent Way*, reproduced articles published in Western magazines. IHA was a small and weak structure which struggled to keep alive.

31. These are rather small church groups compared to the large denominations. The Wesleyans, when negotiating partnership with SIBS in 1987, had a mere 800 members in India; 500 in Madhya Pradesh and 300 in Gujarat under the supervision of an American single lady missionary, Miss Bibbee. The Free Methodists amounted to about 4000 in Maharashtra State and the Nazarenes to about 6000 in Maharashtra, Delhi and South India.

nobility of the purpose expressed, that of "reaching the unreached" thwarted by the inclusion into the Nazarene churches of many Baptist, Methodist and Lutheran families. SIBS was accused as a result to "sheep stealing."³² So the non-denominational image anticipated at the founding changed in the early eighties, though it continued to have a definite theme and constitutional philosophy.³³

Church leaders like Bishop Sundar Clarke of the CSI Madras Diocese and Bishop IP Andrews of the CNI Kolhapur Diocese, who were SIBS council chairmen during 1977-78 and 1981-84 respectively, questioned this tendency at SIBS. Bishop Andrews was chairman when the sharp changes took place. Whereas the leadership of the bishops gave way to developments at SIBS and promoted evangelical partnerships which were not parochial, the next period drove SIBS into a strict conservative evangelical fold under the chairmanship of an SIBS alumni, Methodist evangelist-cum-pastor Theodore Williams (1985-). His leadership brought a halt to indigenous developments and strongly linked SIBS to foreign allies, seeking more and more connections with American small holiness groups rather than the large Indian churches. When the South India Biblical Seminary Alumni Association, which had supported the seminary by raising both scholarship and endowment funds to give it an indigenous financial base, sought to become a partner body and gain official status in its relation to the seminary, the council denied the privilege to the association. Nazarene and other holiness groups which brought funds from America were preferred.

The mid-eighties saw another problem at SIBS in that the Serampore affiliation was called into question on grounds that it did not promote evangelical fervour. Yet the principals during the period – Frank Dewar and S Arles – affirmed that Serampore gave sufficient freedom for SIBS to develop its own particular emphases and that Serampore did not determine the spirituality or the lack of it in any member college. Influenced by the World Evangelical Fellowship and its conservative orientation, Williams ignored the social consciousness of the radical evangelicals of the post-Lausanne period. A move, which appeared to the Serampore faculty as polarising the evangelicals into partisan structures, under the International Council of Accrediting Associations of the WEF Theological Commission, was favoured by the council. Its Vice-Chairman for

32. Information from interaction with staff and council members of SIBS.

33. Every issue of the Prospectus of SIBS indicated this. See *SIBS Prospectus*, *Students' Handbook* and the "SIBS Handbook" which remained in typed mimeographed form, constantly being thought out and often revised.

Gnanakan, who by then was President of the Association of Evangelical Theological Education in India as well as in leadership of the Asia Theological Association, promoted this move.

The concern and involvement of the founding mission reduced itself to mere financial aid in the mid-eighties as the administrative power was now in the Indian council. The desire of the theological educators at SIBS was represented by their few representative voices on the council, whereas decision making remained in the hands of the members and leaders in the council, a majority of whom were not involved in theological education. The thought of becoming a B.D. level college to supply evangelical pastors to mainline churches died a natural death at SIBS in the mid-eighties. The senior Indian staff who dreamed of it were no longer in service as some retired, a few resigned and left and others were terminated by the council under its conservative leadership. Though the link with the mainline churches is continued through the Serampore affiliation and use of an indigenous curriculum prescribed by the Senate of Serampore College, the seminary orientation strictly remains conservative evangelical and American holiness.

The Lindsay Commission had no effect on SIBS, which had its own agenda. The Ranson, Harrison and later studies and findings affected ecumenical developments, but the agenda at SIBS took no note of them. It carried out its own agenda, prescribed by developments in the worldwide conservative evangelical movement. Entrance into the Serampore family of colleges brought new curricular modifications and authority to the degree offered, but the freedom within the Senate of Serampore College allowed SIBS to carry out its own agenda, modified but a little. What the student learned in terms of the content of his theological education has changed, but the overall orientation remained the same; that of pioneer mission among tribes, evangelism among children and youth and a token emphasis on pastoral work.

The influence of the American conservative evangelical pietism of the holiness brand can be seen in the theological education of South India Biblical Seminary. Its curriculum is built on the needs of pioneer missions. Mission is seen purely as evangelism and the saving of souls. Missionary biographies are studied by first year students, partly to shape their "commitment to missions," and partly to prepare them for English medium education. The Missionary Prayer Band, an organization for all students, through its meetings and conventions brings information on missionary needs from all over India and from around the world, promoting intercession and arousing concern and "vision." Worship services are

charged with Biblical content on sin, repentance, confession, restitution, evangelism and mission. Biblical texts such as "Holiness unto the Lord" and "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel" are preached on to emphasise a sense of urgency for personal holiness and propagation of the gospel through proclamation evangelism.

There is no tendency to be "anti-mainline church" or "anti-clerical". Many missionary teachers were ordained men who served the church. Numerous graduates did go to serve the churches as ordained clergy in the Methodist, Nazarene, Baptist, CSI and CNI churches after further training in church-approved colleges where liturgy, polity and other missing aspects were learnt.³⁴ But a definite anti-WCC, anti-NCC and anti-ecumenical attitude prevailed among the missionaries, reflecting their roots in the American holiness movement and National Association of Evangelicals.³⁵ The same attitude was imbibed and accelerated by Indian teachers who uncritically imitated their teachers. Their cultural ethos of both *guru-bhakti* and rote learning inhibited any initiative to question or disagree.³⁶ A strictly evangelical perspective was preserved at SIBS through a library of evangelical holiness literature where even popular Indian journals remained anathema until the late seventies. Affiliation with Serampore in 1976 introduced courses like "Modern Religious and Secular Movements in India," "Church in Contemporary Society," "Indian Christian Theology," etc. The library had to expand to include non-holiness, non-evangelical, ecumenical and secular literature.³⁷ The

34. For example, Rev Karl K Rice was pastor of the Richmond Town Methodist Church, a cosmopolitan English congregation in Bangalore, and Rev Ivan P. Carroll was pastor at the Kolar Methodist Church. About 30% of the male graduates are in pastoral ministry (this would mean 20% of the total graduates from 1937 to 1987).

35. The author in his deputation travels has often noted the strength of the anti-ecumenical overtones in the support groups of WGM in the USA.

36. *Guru-bhakti* = devotion to the teacher. The Indian educational system is highly criticised for its emphasis on rote learning, or "banking education" as Paulo Friere called it. See RS, XX:2, June 1973 for SL Parmar, "Education for Development," pp. 21-28, and Donna Suri, "Radical Education - Friere, Illich and Reimur." Cf. RM Somasekhar, "The Role of the Church in Education Today," *IRM*, LIX:233, January 1970, pp. 75-84; DB Forrester, "The Distinctive Contribution of a Christian College," in *Rethinking Our Role as a College*, Madras Christian College, 1964.

37. The author was among the staff who had to defend the need for modern magazines of India on the shelves of the SIBS library. Only after 1977 did *Illustrated Weekly of India*, *India Today*, *Imprint*, *Bhavan's Journal*, *Ecumenical Review* and other periodicals enter the library.

decrease of missionary personnel from seventeen to two between 1972 to 1982, and the increase of younger Indian staff added definite impetus to modify the perspectives at SIBS.³⁸ In one sense the worldwide evangelical movement was changing after Lausanne 1974 as the question of social responsibility was taken seriously in many evangelical quarters. But at SIBS the influences of the change were slow to come by. SIBS continued to retain loyalty to its roots as "an evangelical holiness seminary,"³⁹ though facing the challenges to the mission of the Christian gospel in the contemporary independent, secular, multi-religious democratic setting where ecumenical voices have risen to articulate an Indian theology in contrast to the Latin captivity of the parent mission.⁴⁰ The following incidents illustrate the struggle for relevance in evangelical theological education at SIBS.

1. The fear of absorption into the non-Christian society around kept SIBS in a strictly guarded "mission compound" existence at Anandagiri. When women of Bangarapet were invited to a Christmas programme in 1979, with incentives of demonstration of Japanese floral decorations, coir indoor flower hanging designs and a play in the local Kannada language by students, women came in greater numbers than expected; and the numbers doubled as their husbands took the opportunity to visit the campus and came accompanying their wives.⁴¹ "This is the first time we had come into this compound" announced a businessman who had sold grains to the seminary for well over twenty years. SIBS was

38. Karl and Grace Rice, Clifford and Edna Dewey, Ivan and Winona Carroll, Lester and Mary Hamilton, John and Edith Powrill, Herbert and Evelyn Reinhardt, Ella Ruth Pratt, Myra Martyn, Frank and Christine Dewey, Pauline Carroll and short term visiting teachers were all gone by 1982, except for Frank and Christine Dewey. Indian staff who taught for long periods included Aleyamma Zachariah, Chacko Athyal, KP Mathai, VM Kattapuram, PK Ninan, JD Arulmani, Siga Arles and Nalini Arles. Indian staff members added included Saroj Mithra, Charles Mark, MB Diwakar, N Jayawanth, and Gana Nath Dash.

39. See copies of the *SIBS Prospectus* wherein this is referred.

40. Robin HS Boyd titled one of his books *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church*, thus to describe the way mission tended to tie the "younger" churches to the old traditional views and forms, both theologically and structurally in faith and order. Boyd's *Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* and MM Thomas' *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, all published in 1969, were seminal works leading the whole of Protestant thinking in India towards renewed thinking.

41. This is significant as it proves how the evangelization of Hindu men may become easier if approached through Hindu women and their interests. Hindu women hold the key for the evangelization of Hindu India.

awakened by this to realise how insular it had been and thus how ineffective was its witness to the local community.

2. Student initiative in 1980 led to the formation of a Muslim-Christian Friendship Group in Bangarapet. The infrequent and occasional gathering of Muslims and Christians to share music, speeches, comparative study of themes in Qur'an and Bible, discussions and tea, was the first attempt in "dialogue with men of other faiths."⁴² But it faced severe criticism of being less than evangelistic, too academic and merely a cultural programme. The whole programme did not progress sufficiently to affect either community.

3. The crying need of the people of Bangarapet matched the cry of the children of staff and students at SIBS for better English-medium education at the primary level. After five years of discussions, when the seminary allowed its staff to experiment in an educational venture, it culminated in the formation of "Bishop Vidyalaya," an English medium primary school.⁴³ The town folk admired the fine quality developed within months, and the school looked a great prospect both to influence the homes in town and to even produce part of the indigenous support that the seminary needed urgently. But the board intervened. It said "This is not our calling. We are not here to run primary schools, but to train evangelists." Much to the dismay and disappointment of the town folk and staff, the board closed down the school.

4. Up to the beginning of the seventies, the needs of the world and the people of India were seen by early missionaries as "spiritual." The socio-economic, political and cultural factors that govern the lives of people were ignored. The only involvement with the surrounding villages was in

42. It was a dialogue with men. Not one Muslim woman participated in the gatherings over the seven years. Women teachers from the seminary, such as Dr Aleyamma Zachariah and Nalini Arles, did participate. Dr Samuel Bhajjan, Director of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, some of his colleagues, Dr. Dwight Baker of the American Baptist Mission, who was earlier a missionary in Israel and later a teacher of Islamics at UTC, Bangalore, were among the speakers to give addresses from the Bible and Koran on select themes.

43. Bishop Vidyalaya, the primary school, had 120 children in the four sections of LKG, UKG, Primary 1 and 2, with 5 teachers 1 secretary-cum-relief teacher and 2 aides. Within the first year it gave a profit of Rs. 10,000 to the seminary. "The school could have grown to contribute a substantial amount for the support of the seminary which is still too dependent upon foreign funds and has a long way to go to become self supporting," said the principal to the board, lamenting the decision to close the school. The parents and children were hurt by the decision and the witness of SIBS suffered a terrible setback.

terms of "open-air evangelistic preaching" on Saturday evenings, Sunday School for children on Sunday mornings and an annual Anandagiri Jathra⁴⁴ to enable conversion and baptism. Only by the mid-seventies a developmental programme was attempted, on a peripheral level, aided by the World Vision International. Later the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action of the NCCI and the Commission on Relief of the EFI gave further avenues to serve the village poor. About 300 children were helped with school uniforms, books, tuition, spiritual programmes and other aids. Village trade unions, training for health workers, free clinics, eye operations, silk worm hatcheries, basket making, loan arrangements with banks and several other activities were organised by the project staff.

The SIBS Health and Rural Development Project was handling out aid and sponsoring children and adult rural educational and health programmes. It contributed to the softening of the people of the area towards the gospel. But the activities of the project staff were to adequately blend with the total curriculum of courses that the students in ministerial training were going through. This process failed. A coordinating of theological education in the class room with the social developmental involvement in society is imperative for carrying out the mission of the church in India. After a decade and a half, the council remained uncertain about the programme and its validity for theological education.

SIBS was unable to concentrate adequately on local needs in order to apply the gospel to serve the local people. Its eyes were taken to needs far away in the tribal areas in the jungles and hills of the Central and Northern India. Preparing pioneer missionaries for the 40 million tribals preoccupied SIBS so that the concerns of the vast majority of Hindu and Muslim people in the local villages and towns were not sufficiently

44. "The Christian Jathra is a five to six day, concentrated evangelistic campaign, carried on in a camp style along the bank of a stream or in some shady grove....It is the Indian version of the Western 'camp-meeting' and the Christian counterpart of the Hindu Jathra," said JT Seamands. See his article "The Jathra" in Roland W Scott (ed.), *Ways of Evangelism: Some Principles and Methods of Evangelism in India*, Madras: CLS for NCCI, 1953, pp 83-90. The term *jathra* used in South India is synonymous with the term *mela* of North India. Seamands explains the various aspects of a *jathra*. His father, EA Seamands, produced a movie film of the Dharur Jathra and raised funds to build numerous Methodist churches in the Deccan area where the church doubled in number during the mid-twentieth century. See JT Seamands' unpublished doctoral thesis on this subject, "Growth of the Methodist Church in South India," 1968. Serampore conferred a doctorate on JT Seamands as a result of this study.

addressed. Past graduates who served in pioneer settings challenged present students to join forces with them. With a crusading mentality, they set up indigenous mission societies essentially to preach the gospel to convert the tribals to Christian faith. They may use medical and social work, but this is essentially to aid the task of evangelization. Tribal cultures are viewed with curiosity, but never studied with anthropological insights.

Under the banner of the Evangelical Fellowship of India all the parachurch ministries, missions and individual evangelical Christians held together, and this gave SIBS a ready link with most of these agencies, enabling both recruitment of students and placement of graduates. Agencies in turn found a recruitment centre and training base in SIBS for their ministries. There was a reciprocal ministry of the SIBS staff and the agency staff, thus enabling a mutuality and mutual influence, which in turn shaped the evangelical movement in India. A vast majority of the staff of Child Evangelism Fellowship, Scripture Union, Children Special Service Mission, Youth For Christ, National Missionary Society, Friends Missionary Prayer Band, Indian Evangelical Mission, Operation Mobilization and other evangelistic agencies are graduates and old students of SIBS, including the first and second Indian principals of the Union Biblical Seminary,⁴⁵ the larger EFI-sponsored seminary at graduate and post-graduate level.

Union Biblical Seminary

The Bible Training College at Yeotmal was started in 1939 by the Free Methodist Church from the USA. By 1945 the college had three missionary and four Indian staff members teaching a variety of courses; theological training for catechists, ordained deacons and elders, normal training and women's classes.⁴⁶ This was a denominational, regional, Marathi medium college enabling the India Free Methodist Church to evangelise the Berar area. Similar were many smaller evangelical denominational missions and schools scattered all over India.⁴⁷

When the evangelicals rallied together to form the Evangelical Fellowship of India in 1951, the first meeting was held on its premises.

45. We shall consider Union Biblical Seminary next. The first and second Indian principals were Dr Saphir P. Athyal (1972-87) and Dr. Brian Wintle (1987-1994), respectively.

46. See CW Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, pp. 118f. Ordinands did a Serampore L.Th.

47. Examples could be the Madras and Allahabad Bible Seminaries of the Oriental Missionary Society International, promoting the Evangelical Church of India; the Nazarene Bible Training School at Washim; the Southern Asia Bible College of the Assemblies of God, etc.

16–18 January 1951;⁴⁸ and two years later when about twenty of the evangelical missions desired to combine their resources to establish a union seminary, the Free Methodists offered their campus to locate such a union seminary.⁴⁹ Thus on 4 September 1953, the Union Biblical Seminary was constituted as an evangelical theological college at B.Th. and B.D. levels. It was accredited by the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI in 1964 and affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College in 1973 at B.D. level. By 1982 courses were established at the post-graduate Master of Theology level in certain fields, and by 1987 at the doctoral level in Old and New Testament studies. EFI regards UBS as one of its projects and is represented on its board through its executive secretary, who normally serves as the board chairman. UBS was housed at Yeotmal for a period of thirty years from 1953, and moved to a newly built campus of its own at Bibwewadi, Pune, in 1983. The old campus at Yeotmal continues with the Free Methodists and houses a Marathi/Hindi medium Bible School as well as a missionary training programme through the Yavatmal College of Leadership Training (YCLT) and the Indian Institute of Cross Cultural Communication (IICCC) of the India Missions Association (IMA).

UBS became the theological capital of evangelicals during its first decade. But the centre of gravity for evangelicalism remained in the south at Bangalore and Madras, where most of the evangelical agencies had their headquarters.⁵⁰ The significance of UBS for the evangelical

48. Robert McMahon, *To God be the Glory: The Evangelical Fellowship of India, 1951–1971*, Delhi: Masihi Sahitya Sanstha, 1970, p. 6. Though the book was printed in 1970, the title implies coverage up to 1971!

49. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

50. EFI's commission on relief (EFICOR) and its educational and training unit (EETU), its mission commission at the Indian Evangelical Mission, its women concerns, and its Christian education wing for Karnataka; the Ambassadors for Christ, the Scripture Gift Mission, The Vacation Bible School and Christian Education Ministries, the Far East Broadcasting Associates, Gospel Recordings Inc., Child Evangelism Fellowship, Indian Baptist Mission, Quiet Corner, Southern Asia Bible College, South India Biblical Seminary, Berean Baptist Bible College, cassette ministries, the Association for Theological Education by Extension (TAFTEE), South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) and India Campus Crusade for Christ are all located in and around Bangalore. Madras houses the World Vision of India, Evangelical Literature Service, Union of Evangelical Students of India, Youth For Christ, Bible Club Movement, Friends Missionary Prayer Band, National Missionary Society, Hindustan Bible Institute, Madras Bible Seminary, Compassion, Southern Asia Christian College, Global Outreach, Gurukul Theological College and Research Centre, etc.

movement has been that the leaders of parachurch agencies and the teachers of smaller Bible Colleges are all trained at UBS. This already gives a nationwide unity. At its inception, Frank Kline,⁵¹ the first principal, spoke about the unified action of evangelicals through the EFI.

We do not claim exclusive representation of all Evangelical thinking in India.... We are not interested in wasting time, energy or money in hunting and denouncing heresies... nor are we desirous of duplicating functions well performed by the National Christian Council. [But] we are interested in emphasising Biblical revelation – truth in the most positive manner we know, in the assurance that that is the best way to overcome heresy.⁵²

The fact that UBS linked with the BTE-NCCI goes to prove this point. The formation of UBS challenged 'the old jibe, so true as to be sore, that 'evangelicals cannot work together,' and this jibe lost some force at the birth of both UBS and EFI.⁵³ The purpose of it all was, as Everett Cattell said at Allahabad meeting of the EFI, to build "a strong evangelical church in India that will be able to weather the storm that... is just around the corner."⁵⁴ He referred here to democratic India wherein the majority Hindu community ruled over the land, defining the status of minority groups such as the Christian community.

One could find UBS alumni scattered in the various church denominations and parachurch evangelistic organizations as pastors, leaders and pioneer workers. At UBS there was a steady increase of emphasis on the church and its need for Bible-based revival preaching and Bible teaching evangelistic pastors. Particular emphasis was placed on ministry in large rural areas. By the third decade, pastoral emphasis took precedence over parachurch ministries under the leadership of the first Indian principal, Dr. Saphir Athyal.⁵⁵ Yet the financial attraction and

51. Frank Kline was an American Free Methodist missionary in India, who served as principal of the UBS when it was formed.

52. McMahon, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 10. McMahon quotes from Dr Cattell's address at the Allahabad EFI meetings. Cattell was foreseeing here the world-ward journey of the ecumenical theology of mission in the sixties.

55. Dr Saphir Athyal of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Kerala had his early theological studies at SIBI and then at UBS and later at Asbury Theological Seminary and Princeton University in the USA. He lectured both at Asbury and at UBS and served as the first Indian principal of UBS from 1972 to 1987. During his leadership he succeeded in developing a quick succession of qualified Indian staff members for UBS faculty, as well as finding the funds for relocating UBS

wider ministerial leadership roles presented by parachurch agencies funded from Western, particularly American evangelicalism, drew most graduates away from ministry in the mainline historical churches.⁵⁶ They either joined parachurch agencies as evangelistic leaders or Bible Colleges as teachers or started their own ministries. As an after-effect of Donald McGavran's teaching while a visiting professor at UBS, some graduates in the early seventies went to serve in rural areas of Tamilnadu, forming their own new church growth missionary structures, such as NJ Gnaniah and B Jeyaraj who formed the Madurai Missionary Movement.⁵⁷ Such commitment to evangelism is seen continually even a decade later as the Maharashtra Village Ministries was formed by another UBS graduate, Kulothungan.⁵⁸

from the secluded rural environment at Yavatmal to a cosmopolitan urban setting in Pune. He served as visiting professor at Asbury, Trinity and Fuller Seminaries in the USA and became a key leader of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. For Athyal's contributions, see "Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation and Evangelism," pp. 998-1005; "Theological Education (Functional Report)," pp. 1308-1309; in JD Douglas (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, Report of the International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, 1974, Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1975; "The Gospel and India's Religious Culture," Strategy Paper No. 2, in *Go Forth and Tell: Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King*, Report of the All India Congress on Mission and Evangelization, Devlali, 12-19 January, 1977, Delhi: EFI, 1977 (not page numbered); "Towards an Asian Christian Theology," *TRACI/ETS Journal*, May 1976, pp. 2-7; *Towards an Asian Christian Theology*, Asian Perspective No. 2, Taiwan: Asian Theological Association.

56. This was often lamented by parachurch leaders, when an intense desire rose among evangelicals to see evangelical theological graduates entering the pulpits of mainline churches.

57. McGavran taught at UBS as a visiting professor in 1974-75; Gnaniah and Jeyaraj, who graduated in 1975, formed the Madurai Missionary Movement, which later became the Church Growth Missionary Movement, and after a disagreement between the founders split into the CGMM and India Church Growth Movement. They worked among unreached villages of Madurai district and later added mission fields in Central India among Korku tribes and also urban work at the Madurai University settlement among students and the Saurashtra people. Bose Meiyappan led the CGMM, Gnaniah the ICGM and Jeyaraj joined Tamilnadu Theological Seminary as Old Testament teacher.

58. Kulothungan from Madras, who graduated in 1983, continued to reside in Yavatmal and organise mission work in various sections of Yavatmal and surrounding districts, raising indigenous support for his work.

UBS and Its Influence upon the Historic Churches

Though UBS was a project of EFI and hence identified with the evangelical new church groups, it began to exert an influence and to attract many students from the historic churches of South India. A major means of this was the Union of Evangelical Students of India. In town after town where evangelical student unions worked, candidates applied to UBS to study, often as independent candidates who were not sponsored by their churches, rejecting the offer of sponsorship from their own churches which they considered "liberal."

Here we shall consider a case to study developments in the Indian evangelical movement and its entry into the mainline church. The town of Kolar Gold Fields lies in the southern tip of Karnataka, where the borders of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka meet. Tamils from the Vellore area, where the American Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church of America worked and won converts, migrated to find employment with the British (John Taylor) owned gold mines as well as the railways. Along with them they brought their church connections; the Church of England at St. Michael's and All Angels' and St. Paul's, the Congregational at St. Thomas and several Wesleyan Methodist churches. Evangelical Lutherans and Roman Catholics followed. Thus Kolar Gold Field had a large (25%) Christian population with vibrant churches. Even as early as the first decade of the twentieth century the churches here were linked with Parani Andy, and soon united with the South India United Church. After independence, when the CSI was formed, Kolar Gold Fields had over twenty worshipping congregations that belonged to the CSI. By the sixties the need for young men and women to take up the ministry of the church became acute.

It was at this time that from the nearby town of Bangarapet, at the initiative of VM Kattapuram of South India Biblical Seminary, evangelical work was established among college students in Kolar Gold Fields. The author and a group of his college friends were influenced by this work and experienced spiritual revival and commitment, and over a dozen of the keen youth felt called to full-time Christian ministry. Kattapuram, SIBS and through them the Union of Evangelical Students of India influenced their thinking. Whereas the CSI would have gladly trained them at UTC and employed them in the local diocese as ordained clergy, they rejected the official channels of church ministry and chose to go as independent candidates to the evangelical Union Biblical Seminary, far away at Yeotmal, to obtain their B.D. degrees. Scholarships were raised for them from the USA by the author, who by then was a student at Ashbury

Theological Seminary, in preparation for a teaching position at South India Biblical Seminary.⁵⁹ The next decade saw a dozen men and women obtain their theological degrees and enter the dioceses of Bangalore, Madras and Vellore to serve the Church of South India. One became a Nazarene clergyman, three became theological educators.

When the first of them applied to the Karnataka Central Diocese at Bangalore, the diocese was not open to UBS graduates. Several factors influenced the opening of doors. A lay leader from Kolar Gold Fields, George Williams,⁶⁰ was on the diocesan ministerial committee and fought for the acceptance of those candidates. Vinay Samuel, earlier Registrar of UBS, became assistant pastor of St. John's Church at the heart of Bangalore city, and was then convenor of the ministerial committee of the diocese. Bishop Kenneth Gill made a personal visit to UBS and felt satisfied at the quality of education and spirituality imparted at UBS. Already in 1976, the CSI Moderator Anandarao Samuel, who was invited to give the convocation address to the first UBS batch of Serampore B.D. graduates, met with the large number of CSI students who were privately studying at UBS because they desired an evangelical education. He probed into the reasons why they did not obtain diocesan support. The process led to the Synod Ministerial Committee studying the issue, and later in 1978 Union Biblical Seminary was accepted as an official centre of ministerial training for CSI ministry. KGF youth who studied at UBS then were able to enter the ministry of the diocese. Several more continued to train at UBS and enter the CSI ministry. The acceptance level depended on individual bishops and dioceses.

The Significance of Principal Saphir P. Athyal

In the leadership of Dr. Saphir Athyal one meets the inner struggles of Indian evangelicalism. When the International Congress on World Evangelization met at Lausanne in 1974, Athyal was on its planning committee, continued on its continuation committee and served as programme director of the Consultation on World Evangelization at Pattaya in 1980. Other Indian Christians like Ben Wati, John Richard and George Samuel were added on to the Lausanne Committee on World

59. At UBS the funds were placed in an account titled "Arles KGF Student Scholarship Fund." The contributions came from the author's preaching at mission meetings in the USA through the Missionary World Service and Evangelism and Asbury Theological Seminary World Outreach Prayer Group.

60. He was area treasurer on the KGF area council and was forceful in his influencing of the committee. His own daughters, Nalini and Vimala, were students at UBS and SIBS, and he was committed to helping the youth of his town in their spiritual development.

Evangelization in due course. Athyal was active in the All-India Congress on Mission and Evangelization at Devlali, 1977 and the Asian Leadership Congress on Evangelization at Singapore, 1979. At Devlali he presented the strategy paper on "The Gospel and India's Religious Culture."⁶¹ His ability to provide rational, academic leadership to mission thinking did not draw popular support from within India, where several others excelled in popularity with their pietistic *bhakti* style of preaching on missions. But Athyal's leadership found acceptance in the Lausanne movement as well as initially in the theological commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Asian Theological Association, of which he was chairman. His wider involvements enabled him to view the role of UBS and evangelicals in the Indian setting from a broader perspective.

He thought that evangelicals should remain within the mainstream of church life. Already the Senate of Serampore College was strong in its influence upon the churches. A Serampore graduate was an acceptable candidate for ministry in most churches, hence Athyal desired to have UBS affiliated with Serampore University. The UBS governing board under the chairmanship of Dr. Ben Wati was convinced, and hence in 1973 UBS was affiliated with Serampore. UBS students from then on gained recognition to enter the mainline churches. But since the acceptance depended also on individual bishops and dioceses, in order to find their favour, Athyal systematically invited the bishops and moderators of the CSI, CNI, Methodist and other church groups to visit UBS as speakers on special occasions. He also invited leaders of the churches from around the world to expand the awareness of UBS and to find wider links. Further, he chose the best students and sent them abroad for postgraduate study to develop qualified future staff for UBS. It is credited to his leadership that by the mid-eighties UBS had six Indian teachers with doctoral degrees in Old Testament, New Testament, theology and Christian education, others with post-graduate degrees in church history, religions, missiology and library science.

Since the seminary was growing in its influence as well as in size, its rural environment in interior Maharashtra became a hindrance, both for staff travels to minister in churches or to participate in conferences and for student practical work. The desire to move to a city like Poona (Pune as it is known now) grew within the seminary family. Though this was displeasing to the Free Methodists and other smaller American groups, Athyal went ahead to find the funds for the relocation of the seminary to a newly built venue in Pune by 1983. While praises were heaped on the

61. See the Devalali volume *Go Forth and Tell*, op. cit.

one hand, he also reaped the displeasure of some of the American missions which did not favour the expense and the wider developments of UBS.

During the later half of the seventies, UBS undertook a major curriculum revision and attempted to make its programme holistic. Men like Chandran Devanesan, who had wide experience with Indian education, non-Indian educational experts from evangelical seminaries and theological teachers from Indian seminaries were consulted on the revision. Through questionnaires and consultations, faculty workshops and self-study of the prevalent pattern, the seminary ventured into major renewal of its campus life, academic and practical orientation.

It was Saphir Athyal's desire to see all evangelical colleges enter Serampore University, and thus as a block exert an evangelical influence. Already the first batch of his students doing Serampore B.D. proved themselves by winning three of the university awards, attesting to the quality of scholarship at UBS. The Serampore family welcomed the entry of UBS into the mainstream and Athyal himself was soon elected into key roles with the senate, as its secretary and its president.⁶² Serampore was wide open to affiliate evangelical colleges.⁶³ In 1977, when the All India Congress on Mission and Evangelization met at Devlali, theological educators who participated in the congress met in a separate session to discuss the pros and cons of Serampore affiliation. Saphir Athyal urged that all colleges must enter the Serampore stream. By then, South India Biblical Seminary had already entered Serampore. Hindustan Bible Institute, Southern Asia Bible College and Allahabad Bible Seminary were considering the move. Calcutta Bible College and Southern Asian Bible College were afraid that their financial support from America would dwindle if they entered the Serampore family.

When Athyal with his keenness to provide wider theological exposure to his students invited M.M. Thomas, the ecumenical theologian from his own Mar Thoma Church, to speak at the reflection seminar in 1976, many conservative leaders attacked him as bringing liberalism into UBS.

⁶² Saphir Athyal was elected secretary of the Senate of Serampore College and played a significant role in influencing the Serampore family.

⁶³ In some ways the Fifth Assembly of the WCC at Nairobi became a comeback process, when the WCC was challenged to return to its biblical roots after the world-oriented journey of the sixties. Mortimer Arias, John Stott and their often-quoted contribution at Nairobi and the reports affirm this; cf. Mortimer Arias, "That the World May Believe" and John RW Stott, "Response to Bishop Mortimer Arias," *IRM*, January 1976, pp. 13-16, 30-33; David Paton, *Breaking Barriers*, Nairobi, London: SPCK, 1976.

Vehement were the attacks from the Federation of Evangelical Churches of India, which already felt uneasy over the dominance of mainline church views in EFI. Its secretary, Chandapilla, and its theological commission secretary, Bruce Nicholls, hastened to form the Association of Evangelical Theological Education in India, in 1979.

UBS continued strong in the trend set by Athyal's leadership until the early eighties. Though it sent observers to AETEL conferences, it remained within the Serampore family, interacting with national developments. Dissenting voices began to rise. Conservative forces under Western influence worked against the creative and innovative leadership of Saphir Athyal at UBS, and his leadership came to an end in 1987 with the appointment of a new principal.⁶⁴

Other Evangelical Colleges

There are about a hundred other theological schools which could be identified as evangelical in persuasion. We should take note of those which offer college level degree or diploma courses of three to four year duration. Southern Asia Bible College of the Assemblies of God churches in India, located at Kothanur in the outskirts of Bangalore city, has over a hundred men and women students drawn from all over India to do their Certificate in Theology, Graduate in Theology, Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Divinity diploma and degrees. The Allahabad Bible Seminary and the Madras Bible Seminary are both denominational colleges of the Oriental Missionary Society International of USA, training workers for their Evangelical Church of India. The Hindustan Bible Institute, supported by conservative and fundamentalist groups in the USA, has grown to accommodate a large student body, aiming at a total of 500 at C.Th., G.Th., B.Th. and B.D. levels. Frequent staff turnover has contributed to the college being less attractive in terms of both academic and spiritual quality. Similarly, the Southern Asia Christian College suffers heavy staff turnover. These are all affiliated to Serampore University.

Among others which are not affiliated with Serampore, Calcutta Bible College trains mostly Baptist candidates from North East India and is located in the same campus with the Carey Baptist Church. It grants its own B.Th. diploma. Numerous Pentecostal and other Bible Schools are scattered across the land, mostly offering short-term courses ranging from a few weeks to two or three years. They are strictly denominational.

64. 1987 became a year of leadership change when Dr. Brian Wintle was appointed acting principal and then confirmed in 1988 as principal of UBS. Saphir Athyal was in the USA teaching at different seminaries as well as serving on the program committee for Lausanne II, to be held at Manila in July 1989.

evangelistic and church planting and largely funded by their Western counterparts and are often led by charismatic individuals. To name a few of them:

Ambassadors for Christ School of Evangelism, Bangalore
Berean Baptist Bible College, Bangalore
Bethel Bible Institute, Bethel, Salem, Tamilnadu
Bethel Bible Seminary, Punalur, Kerala
Central India Bible College, Itarsi, Madhya Pradesh
Evangelical Theological Seminary/Asian Christian Academy, Bangalore
Faith Bible College, Kerala
Grace Bible College, Churachandpur
Jesus Calls School of Evangelism, Madras
Kalvary Bible School, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh
Maranatha Bible School, Madras
Mennonite Bible College, Andhra Pradesh
Nazarene Bible Training School / College, Washim, Maharashtra
Rajasthan Bible Institute, Jaipur, Rajasthan
Tamil Bible Seminary, Madurai
World Missionary Evangelism Bible School, Madras, etc.

The Association of Evangelical Theological Education in India (AETEI)

By 1979 an attempt was made which appeared to endanger the trend under Saphir Athyal's leadership. Elsewhere we noted that in early seventies the smaller evangelical churches formed the Federation of Evangelical Churches of India (FECI), since they thought EFI did not sufficiently represent their concerns, but tended to include a large number of evangelicals from the mainline churches which were members of the NCCI and WCC. The smaller churches were under the sectarian influences of their Western parent bodies, some of which were anti-ecumenical and would have nothing to do with ecumenical structures. They would not financially support their daughter churches in India if they were to relate to the NCCI or related bodies. The FECI now provided an anti-ecumenical, anti-NCC structure, more structured and representative of the strictly evangelical churches than the EFI. This soon affected theological education in India.

As UBS moved into the Serampore family of colleges and became

more acceptable to the mainline churches, and as other evangelical colleges followed the same trend, the FECl Theological Commission called for a consultation on "Theological Education and the Church" at one of its member church colleges, the Madras Bible Seminary, 4-7 February 1979. Of the twenty-two theological institutions invited, fifteen were represented.⁶⁵ There were papers by Vinay Samuel, Chris Sugden and S Arles "Identifying Evangelical Theology in India," and papers by Graham Houghton and Ezra Sargunam on the evangelistic work of Madras Bible Seminary and the Evangelical Church of India,⁶⁶ talks by Anand Choudhuri and Sadhu Chellappa on their experiences of evangelism among Hindus through radio and open-air meetings and discussions on issues faced by contemporary evangelical theology led by Bruce Nicholls and PT Chandapilla, secretaries of the theological commission of FECl and the FECl respectively. They seemed to mastermind the developments that followed. The three-day consultation proposed the formation of an evangelical structure for theological education. Accordingly in November 1979 the AETEI was formed in Madras. It soon linked with the Asian Theological Association of which Bruce Nicholls was an executive member. As the executive secretary of the WEF Theological Commission, he was keen to organise evangelical accrediting structures for Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, America and Europe under the International Council of Accrediting Agencies (ICAA). ATA was to serve India through AETEI.

Such a development was to lead evangelicals in an entirely opposite direction from what Saphir Athyal was envisioning. Hence UBS, though it sent its representatives David Wenham and Narendra John to the 1979 February and November meetings as staff observers, did not become a member of AETEI. They chose to keep informed of the ATA/AETEI developments, but preferred to remain within the Serampore family. All other evangelical colleges which followed UBS into Serampore, continued with Serampore as well as became members of AETEI and thus maintained a dual relationship of Serampore affiliation and ATA accreditation.

AETEI later started the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, offering M.Th. in missions for those who had B.D. qualifications and M.C.S. (Master of Christian Studies) to those who did not have a B.D. degree.⁶⁷ ATA began to induce evangelical colleges in India to come

65. See "Editorial: AETEI" in *TRACI Journal*, 13, April 1979, pp. 1f.

66. All the papers are published in *TRACI Journal*, 13, April 1979.

67. See the *Prospectus: SAIACS M. Th. Course*, Bangalore.

out of the Serampore family and to form a separate evangelical network under AETEI. ATA Executive Secretary Bong Rin Ro visited and spoke to the colleges, their staff and students, indicating that Serampore was only a national structure, whereas ATA accreditation gave a continental recognition in Asia and a link with worldwide evangelical theological education. The naivete of the argument was that Serampore already gave such wider recognition. By 1988 this trend was high on the agenda, as "pop-singer turned theological educator" Ken Gnanakan⁶⁸ became president of both ATA and AETEI, and promoted the Ro approach. The then SIBS principal did not favour the trend, whereas several other member colleges seemed open to consider the view. When the Senate of Serampore College leadership got wind of this move, they resolved at their meeting at Aizawl in 1988 that member colleges should not hold dual affiliation.⁶⁹ This resolution made the ATA proposal less attractive, and what the future would hold for the identity and integration of evangelical theological education in the Indian setting became unclear.

68. As expressed in a TEAR Fund article appealing for funds (£16,000) to build another building at his ACTS Institute.

69. BTE-SSC decided to negotiate terms with the member colleges which already had such dual accreditation, and to only affiliate colleges in future which are not affiliated to any other accrediting association. See minutes of the 1988 meetings, Aizawl. The author was present at the senate and board meetings at Aizawl as a member college (SIBS) principal and participated in the discussion urging that the Serampore family should dialogue and try to retain the evangelical colleges within its fold.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Theological Education of Indigenous Missionaries and Parachurch Ministries

Larger missionary societies recruit their workers from theological and Bible school graduates, as in the case of the National Missionary Society, Indian Missionary Society and Indian Evangelical Mission (Bible School training of at least two years is required by IEM).¹ The Gospel Echoing Missionary Society adds language learning and practical experience in church planting as prerequisites. Some mission societies own their own Bible schools and missionary training programmes. For instance, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band uses its Bethel Bible Institute and Kalvary Bible Seminary; the Evangelical Church of India trains its workers for its India Missionary Movement at its Madras Bible Seminary; Maranatha Full Gospel Ministries trains at its Maranatha Bible Training Institute; Indian Evangelical Team at its Barsheba Gospel Training Centre and the Indian Inland Mission at its Grace Bible College. Others send their candidates to evangelical seminaries which have a missionary orientation. The Indian Evangelical Mission, Friends Missionary Prayer Band, National Missionary Society, Church Growth Missionary Movement and India Church Growth Mission send their candidates to South India Biblical Seminary. But most small missionary societies "do not place any importance on training."² They simply offer a three to six month course or a twenty-one day summer missionary training or a team work experience with movements like Operation Mobilization.³ Bible, theology and missionary principles are learnt in most cases. But most seminary graduates lack anthropological insights and cross-cultural communication techniques.

Theological Institutions in India apparently are not geared to train candidates for missionary vocation, for none has a mission

1. Much of the information in this section is to be found in Roger Hedlund and F Hrangkhuma (eds.), *Indigenous Missions of India*, Madras: HBI Press, 1980. See pp. 140, 6, 107, 123, 134, 120f for information in this paragraph.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

3. GEMS and FGyMA are examples of such societies. *Ibid.*, pp. 93f, 101f, 105.

curriculum and courses offered tend to be too general. Academic type courses are the rule; practical courses are either excluded or are sandwiched into the schedule as "optionals."⁴

The emphasis in theological education at Serampore-affiliated colleges was on preparing pastors. In an overstatement of the case, Roger Hedlund laments, referring to the surveys of theological education done by the Theological Education Fund of the International Missionary Council, that "Training of missionaries from the Third World was not even under consideration in 1962 in most sections of Church."⁵ But in evangelical colleges like the South India Biblical Seminary, a definite missionary emphasis was present in both the planned and unplanned curriculum, promoting mission structures even before 1962. The SIBS curriculum included courses in missionary biographies, mission history, contemporary developments in missions and church growth principles. Practical training was made possible through week-end ministries throughout the year and field work opportunities in pioneer Indian mission stations along with Indian missionaries during summer months. A student organization, the SIBS Missionary Prayer Band, provided an intercessory programme, annual convention and insight into promotional ministry. Already by 1958 an SIBS grandchild through its Vacation Bible School was hatching in the form of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band.

Discrediting the existing theological colleges and seminaries as not meeting the need of missionary training in India, Hedlund declared that "India stands to profit from a top-quality mission institute."⁶ Such an institute would concentrate on the social sciences – anthropology, sociology, linguistics, research and communication – and "relate courses in theology, anthropology, history, geography, linguistics, etc., to mission and Church growth."⁷ To be effective evangelists in cross-cultural

4. See Roger Hedlund, "Missionary Training in the Indian Context," a paper presented at a faculty seminar, Union Biblical Seminary, Yavatmal; printed in *ibid.*, p. 60; cf. *Asia Pulse*, XI:1, January 1978.

5. Hedlund refers to Wilfred Schopel's *The Christian Ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 1962; Douglas Webster's *Survey of the Training of the Ministry in the Middle East*; Bengt Sundkler's *Christian Ministry in Africa* and Clark Scanlon's *Church Growth through Theological Education* (Guatemala). His conclusion that teaching of mission was absent in colleges is criticised by Professor Andrew Walls as unfair, since there was rapid expansion of the church in the areas concerned.

6. *Indigenous Missions*, p. 61.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 62f. Quoted from Nelson's *Readings in Third World Mission: A Collection of Essential Documents* and *The How and Why of Third World Missions: An Asian Case Study*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976.

missions, missionaries need to be good anthropologists, students of human culture, as well as sound theologians. Hedlund, who was a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary and its School of World Mission, taught missions at Union Biblical Seminary, Yavatmal. He proposed that a research and training programme in church growth be opened on Fuller lines at UBS.⁸

But indigenous missions were a step ahead in recognizing, not the absence as in Hedlund's view, but the inadequacy of the training at theological colleges for mission work. Neither missionary zeal nor a seminary degree would suffice; but beyond the "depth in the seminary," it was increasingly felt by indigenous mission societies, that a candidate must "achieve practical dimension in missionary training institutes"⁹ in preparation for pioneer mission work among peoples of different cultures. Indian Evangelical Mission, in partnership with the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship, launched the Indian Missionary Training Institute (IMTI) in 1976, at the Spiritual Life Centre, Chikaldhara, Maharashtra. It later became the Outreach Training Institute (OTI) in 1983.¹⁰ Similarly, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band began to train its staff through specialised training programmes at SIBS and Bethel. The first batch was given language training and missionary orientation at Bethel and a three month course at SIBS during the summer of 1972. There were various attempts made in missionary training.

Research-Oriented Training Programmes

i. The Church Growth Research Centre. Fuller Theological Seminary graduates in India, who were influenced by the teachings on church growth by Donald McGavran and his colleagues at the School of World Mission, conducted a series of church growth seminars during the seventies.¹¹

8. With Ralph Winter, Arthur Glasser, Peter Wagner and others under Donald McGavran's leadership, the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, had become a sort of unofficial headquarter of church growth thinking. Hedlund saw himself as its ambassador to India.

9. IEM Secretary PS Thomas, "Cross Cultural Missionary Training: The Making of Missionary," *IEM Mission Outreach*, August 1983, pp. 7-9. Cf. T Williams, "Missionary Training in India," in *Together in Mission*, Bangalore: WEF Mission Commission, 1983, p. 33.

10. BMMF placed John Garrison to work with IEM as associate missionary in charge of IMTI.

11. They often were resource people to teach and lead seminars and workshops on church growth for churches, seminaries and mission societies which desired to learn the principles of church growth. The author himself, a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary, USA, where he learnt from JT Seamands of McGavran's writings, taught and participated in some of these programmes.

Evangelical seminaries such as SIBS, UBS, SABC and HBI already taught courses in church growth principles, and missionary societies such as the Indian Baptist Mission, FMPB and CGMM attempted to study church growth. In August 1978, there was a national consultation on church growth at Hyderabad with Donald McGavran and Jim Montgomery as resource persons and leaders. It drew about eighty men from all over India; teachers of missiology, church and mission leaders and some missionaries.¹² This consultation resolved and formed the Church Growth Association of India¹³ and the Church Growth Research Centre at Madras.¹⁴ CGRC gathered data on peoples, regions, statistics on church growth, published the *India Church Growth Quarterly* and conducted occasional "McGavran Institute" courses in missiology, to train lay Christians, professional missionaries and others.¹⁵

ii. Christian Life and Leadership Department, World Vision of India. The Missionary Advanced Research and Communication Center of World Vision International (Monrovia, California) was originally set up to "research into the shape and scope of world Christianity." By 1974 it expanded

into the study of people groups where the church was absent – the unreached peoples, highlighted at Lausanne – and by 1980 had begun to publish annual volumes (*Unreached Peoples*, 1979, 1980, etc.) for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.¹⁶

In line with this development, World Vision India developed its department of Christian life and leadership in 1976¹⁷ to sponsor research projects, seminars and consultations on unreached people groups in India. For example, it held pastors' conferences and management seminars to

12. The author, who then taught missions at SIBS, participated in this consultation and recalls the aspirations of the group.

13. The group consisted of the following Fuller graduates among others who were on the governing board: Rev Ezra Sargunam (President, Evangelical Church of India, Madras), Dr. Robert Cunville (Associate Evangelist of Billy Graham, Shillong), Dr. George Samuel (Director, Navajeevodayam, Tiruvalla), Dr. John Thannickal (Director, New Life Centre, Bangalore), Dr. Benjamin Shinde (Registrar, SABC, Bangalore) and Dr. Roger Hedlund.

14. CGRC was led by Hedlund with Vasantharaj Albert as editor of the quarterly bulletin.

15. The McGavran Institute ran short-term courses at various cities of India, using the gifts and expertise of various leaders.

16. See Ralph D Winter's explanations in his "New Frontiers: Edinburgh '80 to Wheaton '83" in *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 1:1, 1984, p. 60.

17. The first director of this department was Varghese M Kattapuram, earlier EFI's missionary to Kenya, later New Testament lecturer at SIBS.

help church and parachurch leaders all over India.¹⁸ In 1980–81 it undertook a research study of the reasons for the conversion of low-caste Hindus to Islam at Meenakshipuram in Tamilnadu.¹⁹ World Vision, through this department, worked with large ecumenical churches as well as smaller evangelical and parachurch groups, assisting in their projects and programmes of development as well as Christian nurture.

Academic and Field-Oriented Training Programmes

i. Theological Institutions. Evangelical seminaries and colleges teach the theory and theology of mission, evangelism and church planting as part of their curricula. Week-end ministries, summer practical work and field trips provide the opportunities to put the theory into practice. Whereas most Serampore-affiliated colleges attach their students to do their practical work with their own recruiting churches as pastoral candidates, evangelical colleges send their students to mission fields, relief projects and evangelistic outreach programmes to train them in various aspects of ministry such as child evangelism, youth work, Christian education, literature work, rural evangelism, open-air preaching, hospital visitation, Bible studies and some amount of pastoral work. The Hindustan Bible Institute sends teams out to do city evangelism in Madras; Madras Bible Seminary has church-planting evangelistic week-end teams; Union and South India Biblical Seminaries have student teams working with missionary societies like FMPB, NMS, IEM, development projects like World Vision, EFICOR and evangelistic programmes through Vacation Bible Schools and Youth Crusades.²⁰ As stated elsewhere, SIBS

18. State level pastors' conferences helped revive pastors who are often made complacent by the routine of their ministerial activities. In 1978 there were two management seminars, one at Delhi for the North and North Eastern church leaders and another at Bangalore for the South Indian leaders, with Ted Engstrom and Sam Kamaleson of World Vision International as the specialist leaders. The author was one of the 150 attending the southern seminar.

19. Meenakshipuram conversions became national news, arousing interest in both political and religious circles. See a report by WVI staff G. Raveendran and KC Jayakumar, "A Closer Look at the Causes, Effects and Implications of the Meenakshipuram Conversions" in *TRACI Journal*, no. 22, April 1982. Cf. articles in *RS*, XXVIII:4, December 1981, pp. 1–66, and Mumtaz Ali Khan, *Mass Conversion of Meenakshipuram: A Sociological Enquiry*, Madras: CLS, 1983.

20. Student teams of MBS went to the slums of Madras city week after week to do tract distribution, open air preaching and house visitation. After about ten weeks, they held a week-end evangelistic open-air campaign. As a result, a few people who respond to the call of the gospel were made into a worshipping group. Even if 10 to 15, they were made into a church, initially worshipping in one of the homes and later constructing a small church building through the

Evangelical seminaries such as SIBS, UBS, SABC and HBI already taught courses in church growth principles, and missionary societies such as the Indian Baptist Mission, FMPB and CGMM attempted to study church growth. In August 1978, there was a national consultation on church growth at Hyderabad with Donald McGavran and Jim Montgomery as resource persons and leaders. It drew about eighty men from all over India; teachers of missiology, church and mission leaders and some missionaries.¹² This consultation resolved and formed the Church Growth Association of India¹³ and the Church Growth Research Centre at Madras.¹⁴ CGRC gathered data on peoples, regions, statistics on church growth, published the *India Church Growth Quarterly* and conducted occasional "McGavran Institute" courses in missiology, to train lay Christians, professional missionaries and others.¹⁵

ii. Christian Life and Leadership Department, World Vision of India. The Missionary Advanced Research and Communication Center of World Vision International (Monrovia, California) was originally set up to "research into the shape and scope of world Christianity." By 1974 it expanded

into the study of people groups where the church was absent – the unreached peoples, highlighted at Lausanne – and by 1980 had begun to publish annual volumes (*Unreached Peoples*, 1979, 1980, etc.) for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.¹⁶

In line with this development, World Vision India developed its department of Christian life and leadership in 1976¹⁷ to sponsor research projects, seminars and consultations on unreached people groups in India. For example, it held pastors' conferences and management seminars to

12. The author, who then taught missions at SIBS, participated in this consultation and recalls the aspirations of the group.

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continued to be the major training centre for Indian missionary societies like FMPB, NMS, IEM, CGMM and ICGM. It has a context of missionary vision, thus training a large section of students as missionaries. Allahabad Bible Seminary and Southern Asia Bible College are denominational colleges similar to Madras Bible Seminary, training church planters and pastors for the ECI and the Assemblies of God churches.

ii. South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS). The Association for Evangelical Theological Education in India, formed in 1979 for the purpose of fellowship and mutual support among evangelical colleges, recognised the need for training beyond B.D. level for faculty development for smaller Bible schools. Hence it set up SAIACS in 1982 to provide a master of theology programme in the field of missions. Candidates who did not have a B.D. qualification, obtained a master of Christian studies (MCS) for the same two-year long course. At SAIACS an attempt was made to blend theory-based academic studies with field-based practical training. It kept in close touch with missionary societies and used missiology teachers from Indian seminaries as well as visiting lecturers from Western countries.²¹

iii. The Centre for Mission Studies at UBS, Pune. For a number of years Union Biblical Seminary offered a missions major in its B.Th. and B.D. programmes. On 24 October, 1982, it inaugurated its Centre for Mission Studies, a school of world missions, at its new campus in Pune.²² The Centre offered a two-year master's degree course in missions and a diploma course for missionaries in service, and planned to develop facilities for research in Hinduism, Islam and traditional religions. The

Evangelical Church of India (of the OMS International). See Ezra Sargunam's thesis *Multiplying Churches in Modern India*, Madras: HBI press, 1974. The author was chairman of the practical work committee at SIBS for some years, during which he recalls that each student obtained a different practical work assignment each year; VBS/mission field/church work were the basic three covered within the B.Th. programme. Other options included relief work, hospital evangelism, literature evangelism, etc.

21. See *M. Th. in Missiological Studies – Prospectus*, AETEI, 1981. After a pilgrim existence in Madras and Bangalore, SAIACS built its permanent campus on the outskirts of Bangalore. The Rev. Dr. Graham Houghton of New Zealand, OMSI missionary and former principal of MBS headed the programme. See *SAIACS Prospectus* for details.

22. See "New Centre for Mission Studies," a report in *India Missions*, 5:1, January-March, 1985, p. 2. Principal Saphir Athyal declared "Christ's mission in the world should be the core of the training programme and the guiding force of any theological seminary."

programme was to be academic, research-oriented and incorporate a field-orientation as much as possible.

iv. Cross Cultural Missionary Training Institute, Yavatmal. When UBS moved away to Pune, the seminary campus at Yavatmal was open for new use. The Yavatmal Consultation on Missionary Training explored the options of the need to establish a Hindi/Marathi medium B.Th. programme, a college of Christian leadership, a conference centre for the use of missionary agencies and the need to expand missionary training facilities. The Indian Institute of Cross Cultural Communication (IIOCC) of the Indian Missions Association already requested to be located on this campus. In its meetings the committee decided on "an all India level," "specifically missionary training institute" as a "new milestone in missions" in India,²³ bringing together the increased availability of workers for the mission field and the increased need for *swartics*²⁴ to be trained, through a two-year course, for an English-medium diploma in missiology. Students were to obtain theory and academic learning Monday to Friday morning and spend the week-end with the tribals of Yavatmal district, attempting evangelization.²⁵

Directly Field-Oriented Training Programmes

Whereas the above cater for the training needs of many agencies and operate from a wider base, larger missionary societies are setting up their own centres of training.

i. Outreach Training Institute of IEM. As earlier mentioned, Indian Evangelical Mission in conjunction with the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship developed its Indian Missionary Training Institute in 1976, which later became the Outreach Training Institute (OTI) in 1983, and functioned earlier at Nasik and later at the Spiritual Life Centre, Chikaldhara. A permanent location was planned at Hosur near Bangalore. IEM workers as well as other missionaries were trained at OTI in an English-medium programme offering courses in the biblical basis of mission, evangelizing across cultures, linguistics and adult literacy, practical anthropology, community health and basic health care, etc. Since recruits were already Bible-school trained, the OTI course supplements

23. Unpublished minutes of the Yavatmal Consultation on Missionary Training, 1-3 October 1983, Yavatmal, pp. 3-5.

24. *Swartics* means "evangelists" in Hindi.

25. The then-director of the programme, Narendra John, in a pamphlet, *A Training College for Cross Cultural Workers*, Yavatmal, 1984, introduces the programme.

what is lacking in their earlier training.²⁶

ii. Bethel Bible Institute. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band had grown rapidly as its revivalist and expansionist approach brought about numerous prayer groups and missionary candidates. Bethel Agricultural Fellowship, a close ally of FMPB, saw their children's homes yield large numbers of candidates for Christian work. Unable to secure admission at the three popular evangelical colleges of their choice, SIBS, UBS and HBI, Bethel Agricultural Fellowship and FMPB together developed the Bethel Bible Institute on Bethel campus in the later half of the seventies. A diploma in missions as well as a Serampore B.Th. through HBI were offered to the missionary candidates who enrolled at Bethel.²⁷

iii. Kalvary Bible Seminary. This women's college became the venue for training FMPB single women candidates. Though segregation of sexes in training is imposed by the conservative culture of Tamilnadu, the recruitment of women for full-time Christian work had been on the increase, and hence the need arose to provide for their training. Single women were sent to Kalvary Bible Seminary.²⁸ Married women accompanied their husbands to the various seminaries, either to do the "wives' courses" or, if qualified, a Serampore B.Th./B.D. degree.

iv. Indian Institute of Cross Cultural Communication. Beyond the confines of the individual missions and colleges, co-operative national structures have also emerged for missionary training. In 1980, the India Missions Association sponsored the IICCC²⁹ as a twelve week long course in phonetics, phonemics, grammar, semantics, literacy, language learning, anthropology and such subjects which were absent in a seminary curriculum. IICCC also holds translation workshops recognising the nearly thousand dialects in India into which the scripture is yet to be translated. IICCC was later located at Yavatmal.

Innovative Training Programmes

i. Courses for the laity. Schools of evangelism. The evangelical community saw the development of a strong lay movement through the active work of indigenous missionary societies, the Union of Evangelical

26. See "IEM Annual Report" in *IEM Mission Outreach*, February 1984, pp. 11-14. John Garrison of BMMF, Rona and Trevor Locke of New Tribes Mission, and several IEM staff were teachers at IMTI/OTI.

27. Information from the Rev GS Mohan, director of BBI, and Mr P. Samuel, secretary of Bethel Agricultural Fellowship and founder of the FMPB movement.

28. The author interviewed Ms Parrot Rajeswari, a BD graduate of UBS and an FMPB missionary who taught at KBS, when she visited Aberdeen in 1985.

29. Information quoted from IICCC folder.

Students of India and revival prayer groups. In Tamilnadu one finds state level networks of the FMPB, UESI and Laymen Evangelical Fellowship³⁰ which are extremely influential. FMPB organised its intensive Bible teaching and discipleship week-end and longer conferences which were attended by their prayer group leaders and area leaders. UESI through its graduate programme for professional associates such as the Evangelical Teachers Fellowship of India, Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India, Evangelical Businessmen and Government servants etc., organised programmes in line with the particular profession of the graduates. Here the attempt was made to study one's faith in relation to one's profession. UESI had a national Bible study centre offering courses at Highfield, Kotagiri, ranging from a fortnight to eight months in duration. LEF conventions were used for teaching and training. Training committed lay members was a great concern to all these groups. They organised local, regional and state level seminars, discipleship courses and Bible teaching conferences. A helpful development was the way schools of evangelism were run by various groups.

South India Biblical Seminary ran an annual summer school of evangelism, a three week course during the month of May. From the mid-fifties this attracted an average of fifty laymen and women of all ages and backgrounds from all over India and neighbouring countries to learn from this intensive course in evangelism. As a teacher and later director of this programme, the author noted how effective the programme was in "turning on" the laity for evangelistic activities. The curriculum included a study of the Gospels, observing the methods of Jesus in working with people, a study of the book of Acts to learn from the early church's experiences and approaches, a course in general and personal evangelism, with specific look at literature, radio, visitation, open-air, village, tribal and urban evangelism, work with children, youth and adults, the use of art, drama, songs, counselling and other gifts for evangelism, etc. An atmosphere of genuine spiritual hunger was promoted through revival and deeper life preaching in the evening services, and thus the whole course affected the participants. Agencies such as the Children's Special Service Mission and Scripture Union as a rule sent their new recruits, even though theologically trained graduates, to attend this course as a booster shot to enthuse them for evangelism.

30. With its headquarters at Madras, the Laymen Evangelical Fellowship was led by Brother N Joshua Daniel. Its members were officially members of other denominations, worshipping and participating there, but still meeting regularly in the LEF company for nurture and fellowship.

Similarly, the Billy Graham Associate evangelist Akbar Haqq conducted two week long schools of evangelism in various parts of India; a popular evangelist-cum-healer DGS Dhinakaran³¹ ran the "Jesus Calls School of Evangelism" in Madras; the Ambassadors for Christ evangelists preachers ran a school of evangelism at Bangalore. Child evangelism took priority in schools organised by the Child Evangelism Fellowship. These were thoroughly spiritual, Bible-based and evangelistic training programmes geared towards mostly lay Christians, though at times pastors and Christian workers did attend them for a refresher course. Some of them gave a certificate, but none gave a diploma or degree. Whereas these were all for evangelism, there were education-oriented programmes run by agencies such as the Christian Education Department of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (CEEFI) and the India Sunday School Union.

ii. Short term training. Operation Mobilization. OM, as it is popularly known, was a literature evangelism ministry which took young men and women, trained them for literature distribution, open-air preaching and personal evangelism, placed them in teams which travel place to place, staying a few days or weeks in a place to distribute tracts and booklets. They sold old and new books on discount, with the proceeds going to support the group for their food and basic needs. The team stayed either in a church or with a Christian family, did literature work through the day, evangelistic teaching preaching ministry in the evenings and involved local youth along with them to influence them with Christian discipleship. The length of stay on a team was determined by the individual. Some entered full-time Christian ministry as a result, others entered secular employment with a commitment and discipline obtained through their experience in OM. The team life prepared a young person to develop personal discipline in terms of devotion, Bible study, witnessing, caring for others, sharing everything and interpersonal relationships, and thus enabled a maturing of personality and personal skills. OM was used by some of the indigenous mission societies, seminaries and churches as a practical training avenue for their candidates, students and youth.

iii. Courses for self-supporting missionaries. "Tent makers" and "self-supporting missionaries" are concepts that are emphasised in contemporary mission thinking. Institutions such as the Prakash Institute,

31. Dhinakaran was a bank official who became popular as a lay preacher. He held healing crusades and conventions with mass appeal. His radio and literature ministry and prayer emphasis were similar to that of the American electronic (television) evangelists.

the Bethel Agricultural Fellowship and the ACTS Institute of International Needs³² attempted to give vocational training to youth along with a certain amount of spiritual nurture, in order that they could be self-supporting witnesses to the gospel. The concept is not new, as the churches have had their vocational institutes such as the schools of nursing and midwifery, teacher training, carpentry, sewing, printing etc.³³ Whereas the church-run programmes lacked sufficient funds for expansion, some of the parachurch programmes drew large sums and established much bigger works, such as the Bethel Agricultural Fellowship with its vocational training units in steel furniture, weaving, leather goods, printing, etc.

iv. EFICOR Educational and Training Unit. This represented yet another emphasis, that of developmental projects expressing the compassion of Christ to the socio-economically underdeveloped sections of society. The EFI Commission on Relief³⁴ made a significant contribution to render relief to cyclone victims of coastal Andhra Pradesh during the floods of November 1977 and May 1979. From the lessons learnt from such involvement, the role of education in the fields of rehabilitation and development was recognised and EFICOR organised its Education and Training Unit (EETU). As a pioneer project, EETU right from the beginning catered for the mental, physical, social, economic and religious developments of the people. It acted as a catalyst to facilitate community development organisers to grasp biblical values, God's concern for

32. Prakash Institute was at Nagpur. This and Bethel have done much in terms of the number of youth trained. International Needs sponsored a small programme called ACTS Institute at the outskirts of Bangalore, which drew a dozen or so high schoolers and drop outs and catered to train them. But it drew undue attention to itself compared to most church-run vocational guidance programmes. See Roger Hedlund, "Tentmakers Arise," *India Church Growth Quarterly Bulletin*, 10:1, January-March 1988; John Christian, "Bivocational Missionaries: An Alternative to the Unfinished Task," *ibid.*; cf. Ken Gnanakan, *ACTS Institute: A New Model for Theological Education*, Asian Perspective No. 31, Taiwan: ATA, 1983.

33. For example, the Vocational Training Centre at Tumkur; nursing training at CMC Hospital, Vellore; the midwives training at Ikkadu, etc.

34. EFICOR was formed as a committee of EFI in 1967 and made a commission in 1970. Information compiled here is drawn from various articles and EFICOR publications; "EFICOR in Action," an unpublished report given to the EFI Study Commission in 1980; *Information letter* for May 1981, VI:4, 1981; *In Contact*, December 1985-March 1986, July 1986; *Mustard Seeds*, December 1984; letter of EFICOR director (Rtd) Lt. Col. M. R. Mathew to the author, dated 6 August 1979; "Summary Report of EFICOR Work" by Mr Mathews, November 1979; *EFICOR's 2nd Milestone: Chodavaram*, Bangalore: EICOR, 1979.

mankind, technical input and skills in organising people for their own welfare. EETU utilised the following programmes:³⁵ 1. Community development organizers (CDO) training; 2. The CDO refresher course; 3. Project holders' workshop; 4. CDO extension programme; 5. Youth work study camp; 6. Seminars and conferences; 7. Theological students' service study camp; 8. "Ministering to the poor" workshop; 9. Pastors' conferences; 10. Senior executives' workshop; 11. Adult education workshop; 12. Christian schools consultation; 13. Women in community development forums; 14. Children as bearers of vision seminar; 15. Communication for development workshop; 16. Urban development clinic; 17. Community health workshop; 18. Workshop on appropriate technology for rural development; etc.

EFICOR draws funds for relief, rehabilitation and development activities in various centres in India from the TEAR Fund (The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund). The North East India Commission on Relief and Development (NEICORD) was formed to cater for that region of India. In Bangalore and Delhi, CDO courses were organised to give a four-month intensive training covering subjects dealing with culture and development, economics of development, poverty, hunger and justice, project planning, administration, need assessment, Biblical understanding of poverty, rural and urban slum psychology; counselling skills, etc.³⁶

EFICOR co-sponsored nationwide consultations such as the All India Conference on Evangelical Social Action, Madras 1979; a conference on the theology of liberation and the theology of development, both at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield in 1979-80 and urban evangelism seminars in different parts of India during 1984. Both ordained and lay leaders were aroused through these to freshly learn of the significance of Christian involvement in contemporary society.

v. Theological education by extension. The first experiments and first use took place in Guatemala and Bolivia. The TEE movement, as it is popularly known, attempted to train laymen and women who could not get involved in residential training, but were actively involved in leadership roles as elders, deacons and lay-preachers. It offered courses in Bible, theology and ministry at an extended pace.³⁷ It was introduced in India

35. See "A Glimpse of our Training Programmes," *In Contact*, July 1986, pp. 18-19; "EFICOR Training Unit Programmes," *Mustard Seeds*, December 1984, pp. 18-19.

36. Training unit staff have written several courses and books which form the basis of the training programmes; *Jesus the Liberator*, *Poverty and Development*, *The Gospel for the Whole Person*, *A Biblical Basis for Development*, *Biblical Model for Social Transformation* and *Biblical Case Studies in Development*, etc. These are mostly produced as TAFTEE courses.

37. For an account of TEE, see Wayne C Weld, *The World Dictionary of*

first by Peter Wagner and Ralph Covell at a seminar in September 1970 at the Union Biblical Seminary campus. At the EFI annual conference at Vellore in January 1971, it was introduced to a wider constituency and an Indian work was inaugurated through the formation of The Association for Theological Education by Extension (TAFTEE).³⁸ Its primary object was the "training of committed lay people to exercise ministries," "training largely the unordained."³⁹ Serampore University did offer an external B.Th. and B.D. for those who could not go for residential training.⁴⁰ But the advantage of TAFTEE was the fact that it was at the level of the pupils and provided opportunity for week-by-week study from programmed instruction packets, and the possibility of first-hand discussion with fellow students and tutors. TAFTEE developed four long-range aims, i.e. to enable students become

1. Effectively engaged in evangelism;
2. Effective Bible students and teachers;
3. On-going participants in spiritual growth, personal and corporate;
4. Responsible members of society, in the family unit and the national unit.⁴¹

Theological Education by Extension, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973 and the supplement in 1976; James A Bergquist, "Extension and Other Alternative Forms of Theological Education," *Point* (published in Papua New Guinea), no. 1, 1976, pp. 183-198; James Goff, "TEE and Romans 13:1-7 'Power'," *RISK*, 7:2, 1971, pp. 32-37; Rose Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education*, Pasadena: WCL, 1981; *Ministry by the People*, Geneva: WCC, 1983; "TEE Comes of Age" and "Equipping God's People for Mission," *IRM*, April 1982; Kenneth B Mulholland, "A Guatemalan Experiment Becomes a Model for Change," *IRM*, April 1982; Ralph Winter, *Theological Education by Extension*, Pasadena: WCL, 1969.

38. For a history of TEE in India, see articles in TAFTEE literature; "A Brief History of TAFTEE" in *Introducing TAFTEE*, 1982; "Special Tenth Year Anniversary Issue, 1971-1981" of *TAFTEE Times*, VII:3, September 1981; VK Samuel and C Sugden, "TAFTEE: An Indian Approach to Training for Ministry," *IRM*, LXXI:282, April 1982, pp. 172-178; James A Bergquist, "Village Ministries and TEE in India: A Case of Unfulfilled Potential," *Extension Seminary*, no. 2, 1974, pp. 1-5 and *NCCR*, 1974.

39. Samuel and Sugden, *op. cit.*, p. 173; see first TAFTEE director Ian McCleary's "The First Fevered Five Years," in *TAFTEE Times*, September 1981, p. 1.

40. The advantages of extension (TAFTEE) programme over against the external study programme of Serampore is discussed by Lutheran missionary Herbert Hofer of Gurukul Theological College, Madras. See *TAFTEE Times*, September 1981, p. 9.

41. See "TAFTEE Curriculum and Courses" in a booklet *TAFTEE: Theological*

It started with 60 students in 4 centres in 1971, at Bangalore, Madras, Hyderabad and Bombay. By 1977 it had 414 students in 35 centres and in 1980 had 500 enrolled in 51 centres. By 1981 the total trained by TAFTEE in a decade amounted to "1275 middle-class and professional people" in its Bachelor of Theological Studies (BTS) programme. And earlier in the first four years it trained over 2000 students in ten different Indian languages through its Certificate Level Programme (CLP).⁴²

TAFTEE's significance was described by Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden in an article in the *International Review of Mission*.⁴⁴ They noted that 30% of students enrolling for TAFTEE courses were women, and exclaimed that this was significant in a setting where "there has been a steady decline in the participation of women in the church's ministry since Independence in 1947" and where "the churches have reduced the avenues through which trained women can serve."⁴⁵ But there were women students at several seminaries, and CSI dioceses employed diocesan women workers (DWW).⁴⁶ It was during the seventies that the Bangalore-based Karnataka Central Diocese ordained its first women ministers and continued to train women for ministry. Though Samuel and Sugden overstated their case, the point is to be taken that nearly a

Education for Whom? Undated, p. 6.

42. Samuel and Sugden, *op. cit.*, p. 178. See also the reflections of TAFTEE graduates in *TAFTEE Times*, September 1981, pp. 14-20.

43. See *Introducing TAFTEE*, p. 8. CLP was started in 1978 adapting the SEAN material from South America.

44. Samuel and Sugden were chairman and assistant director of TAFTEE as well as pastor and assistant at St. John's CSI Church in Bangalore at the time.

45. Samuel and Sugden, *op. cit.*, p. 173. Two of the women graduates of TAFTEE who give significant leadership were Mrs. Grace Sathiyaraj (principal of Tunbridge School; vice-president, NMS; visiting lecturer, Haggai Institute of Evangelism) and Mrs. Juliet Thomas (formerly a school teacher and later the first woman secretary with EFI, confined to a conservative stream within evangelicalism). See their papers presented at the TAFTEE graduates seminar at ECC, Whitefield, May 1982, "The Promise of Evangelism Among Women in India Today" and "The Contribution of Women in Ministry," respectively.

46. The author was acquainted with the work opportunity that women had in the Madras and Bangalore dioceses through his own kith and kin employed as a Diocesan Women's Worker in Madras diocese and as a chaplain in Bangalore CSI Hospital during the early seventies. Samuel and Sugden's point is highly debatable, as the history of the CSI proudly notes the growth of the CSI order of women with Sister Carol Graham and colleagues. We should note the contribution of the Christu Seva Vidyalaya in an ecumenical setting, and the increase of women students in particularly the evangelical seminaries like SIBS. Numerous North Eastern women students applied to UBS, SIBS and other colleges.

third of TAFTEE enrolment was of women. They rightly indicated that lay people enrolled for courses, representing a "grossly under-staffed" church situation in India and narrated the gruesome reality that

One diocese of the Church of South India has almost no clergy between the ages of 40 and 60. One Methodist conference is finding it impossible to fill key pastorates. In northeast India one church has 300 congregations but no theologically trained pastor; yet in 1979 it reported 1000 baptisms. A survey published in 1974 found that only two per cent of pastors and church teachers in India had seminary training.⁴⁷

Based on its understanding that "the whole Church must be equipped for mission" and that "every member of the Body of Christ has gifts to be developed and used in the ministry," TAFTEE worked towards "a true democratization of the people of God," breaking the authoritarian mode of Indian culture.⁴⁸ TAFTEE noted that access to information was limited to leaders, whereas the whole laity should have this access if the mission of the total church should be accomplished. While commending the "several fine theological colleges offering residential theological education,"⁴⁹ it severely criticised their limitations:

The seminaries struggle to provide respectable degrees with adequate academic content incorporating the best in theological scholarship around the world, to meet the requirement of churches for ordinands to have recognised degrees, and also to provide proper ministerial formation, which can only take place in a context of action and reflection....The current seminary programmes are in the end forced to opt for high academic content and degree orientation. Ministerial formation is expected to be a by-product.⁵⁰

This criticism is not entirely true. Evangelical seminaries place high emphasis on practical training and personal formation. Ecumenical colleges also are keen to address the question of spiritual formation. The Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College promotes emphasis on spiritual formation in member colleges.⁵¹ TAFTEE

47. Samuel and Sugden, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

49. See "TAFTEE's Philosophy" in *Introducing TAFTEE*, p. 11.

50. Samuel and Sugden, *op. cit.*, p. 173. Cf. George Joseph, "TEE's Potential for Contributing to Theological Education in India Today," paper presented at the graduates seminar, ECC, May 1982.

51. During 1983-85, BTE-SSC emphasised and held a consultation on "Spiritual Formation in Theological Education." Reports were received from member

itself was growing towards academic excellence, desiring to develop post-graduate courses beyond its BTS and CLP programmes.⁵² Degree and academic excellence are not problems in themselves, but maintaining a balance with spirituality and spiritual formation is. Evangelical colleges have had better success in spiritual formation and ecumenical collaboration than colleges that boast of academic relevance. We shall further deal with this elsewhere in this book.

TAFTEE continued to contribute to the training of laity, and as everywhere else does in India, it too grew, meeting a certain need in the wider church. It had the co-operation of the CSI, CNI, Mar Thoma, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist and other churches, and thus offered wider usefulness. But TAFTEE itself was not bound to TAFTEE in India. The Tamilnadu Theological Seminary at Madurai developed its Theological Education for Christians (TECCA). We shall consider TECCA when we discuss the relevance of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and its effectiveness in theological education.

colleges explaining their methods of maintaining and promoting spirituality. These were later published in a volume edited by Henry S Wilson, Director of Religious Studies.

52. For further information on BTS and CLP, see *Introducing TAFTEE, Theological Education for Whom?* and the prospectus for BTS, TAFTEE.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

One National Structure and the Study of Priorities in Theological Education in India

Board of Theological Education

Theological colleges and seminaries of the older historic churches trained their ministry in affiliation with the Senate of Serampore College, which gave them the theological focus, curricula, evaluation and accreditation, and granted degrees based on its charter. Younger and conservative bodies trained their workers in their non-Serampore Bible schools and seminaries. The two remained separate during the Ranson and Harrison studies on theological education in India in the forties and fifties. The National Christian Council's Committee on Theological Education attempted to help in planning, evaluating and aiding developments in theological education to the ministry of the church. This committee, as we noted elsewhere, was responsible in setting up the Ranson and Harrison studies. As both studies indicated, there was need for a structure that would bring together, coordinate and accredit the work done by those Bible schools which were not affiliated to Serampore College. Ranson did not think that the "Fundamentalist-Modernist" controversy was a live issue.¹ In discussing the case for co-operation, he noted among other problems the problem of the differences between American, British and continental approaches to ministry and ministerial training as hindering co-operation in theological education in India. Differences of historical, cultural and denominational nature were all often camouflaged as theological. Ranson went on to say that

Where this issue is alive, however, and where it is strongly felt that theological conviction renders comprehensive co-operation inexpedient or impossible, it would clearly be unwise to attempt to force the pace of united action. There is a possibility that union and co-operation might be fostered "among those who may be called

1. Perhaps, in the early forties, he was right. We consider elsewhere in this book how in 1950-51 the issue was made alive, and structures emerged to polarise committed Christians into opposing camps.

thoroughly conservative – those who represent a very strict view of Bible inspiration and the definiteness of Christian doctrine....It might lessen dissension if people of this type were assisted to get together in an institution of their own.²

The Ranson report asked the NCC Committee on Theological Education to give assistance to this getting together of the conservative groups and institutions. The Harrison report *After Ten Years* referred to these groups as the "denominations which have been established in India only fairly recently, and which do not yet have a strong church constituency."³ A trend among them in the fifties was to associate themselves together under the leadership of the Union Biblical Seminary, Yeotmal, which was officially formed in 1953 by fourteen such member denominations of the Evangelical Fellowship of India. The more conservative of these groups did not wish to be linked with Serampore.⁴

Hence the NCCI in 1955 formed the Board of Theological Education, which brought together all the unaffiliated Bible schools and seminaries and provided to them facilities of evaluation, coordination and accreditation. To begin with, BTE took over the functions of the NCCI Committee on Theological Education and worked in relation with the NCCI, but later it became autonomous and served the many non-Serampore institutions of theological education. The principals of these institutions met in consultations and mutually helped each other. Union Biblical Seminary, as the larger body among the conservative evangelical institutions, had a leadership role in this Board of Theological Education. Its first Indian principal, Saphir Athyal, was later its honorary secretary. The BTE accreditation commission developed a range of inquiry and evaluation criteria and served colleges by evaluating and accrediting them.

BTE did not have a full-time or part-time secretary during its last five years, and therefore it limited its services to certain essential ministries.⁵ It sponsored various programmes including the visit of guest lecturers to various colleges, a seminar on Theology-in-Action in cooperation with the Christian Conference of Asia and Urban Industrial Mission, a five-

2. See CW Ranson, *Christian Minister in India*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1946, p. 175.

3. See MH Harrison, *After Ten Years*, Nagpur: NCCI, 1957, p. 44.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

5. Information gathered from Dr. Saphir P. Athyal's letter, as the then honorary secretary of BTE-NCCI, dated 31 December 1976, to the members of BTE-NCCI.

day workshop for writers and leaders of extension education programmes, All India Study Consultations on Training of the Whole Church, and librarians' and teachers' training institutes with the use of educational specialists. It advised the Theological Education Fund on its assistance programme in the area of producing vernacular theological literature.

After a series of joint consultations with the Senate of Serampore College, BTE decided in favour of the formation of one national structure for theological education in India. When the Senate of Serampore College accepted the proposal, a joint structure was formed in July 1975. The Board of Theological Education dissolved itself at its last General Body Meeting on 3 February 1977 at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam.⁶

One National Structure for Theological Education

During 1971–72 there were five national consultations on theological education in India. There was a proposal in 1971 to constitute an Indian Theological Research Institute under the senate to care for research studies and programmes; and in 1974 the senate considered the proposal favourably. The Theological Education Fund sponsored consultation in Madras observed, similar to the Bangalore 1969 and Yeotmal 1972 joint consultations of BTE and the Senate of Serampore College, that two parallel structures in the form of the BTE and the SSC were not needed, and suggested a restructuring of the senate to form one integrated association,

which shall be a creative centre of renewal of ministry and theological reflection, flexible enough to allow freedom and radical changes and wide enough to include even small groups.⁷

BTE agreed with the suggestion and approached the senate. In response the senate made its first suggestion for the formation of One National Structure for Theological Education in India in 1973.⁸ A joint committee of BTE and SSC representatives was formed in 1973,⁹ and it presented its concerns to the senate in 1974.¹⁰ It proposed that theological education must be organized so as to

6. *Ibid.*

7. See "Report of the TEF Consultation on Theological Education held at Madras, 19–20 November 1971", p. 2, and the *Senate and Executive Minutes* 1973, Appendix II.

8. See *Senate and Executive Minutes*, 1973, p. 966.

9. See Resolution XIX, *ibid.*, p. 966.

10. The joint committee proposals are quoted from the *Senate and Executive Minutes*, 1974, Appendix A, pp. 24ff, 31ff.

- a. Meet the challenging new patterns and demands of the ministry
- b. Be an agent of change in the structures of the church and society to achieve their objectives
- c. Be an instrument of renewal for mission and self-reliance
- d. Encourage reflection, articulation and communication of the faith in Christ, related to concrete life situations.

Already here we note a desire to contextualise theological education in "concrete life situations" and to address the structures of both "church and society." For this the joint committee proposed that "The colleges must be encouraged and given freedom to try new models of curricula and new patterns of theological education to achieve such goals."

It was noted that up to this time the Senate of Serampore College took care of academic administration and research; and the Board of Theological Education, earlier of the NCCI and later independent, was responsible for "Co-ordination, Consultation and Ecumenical Relations." It was proposed to reorganise so as to bring the three concerns of "Academic Administration," "Research" and "Co-ordination, Consultation and Ecumenical Relations" under the senate to interact and contribute to the total theological education in India. The senate was to make its own rules and structures for the effective fulfilling of its functions, the evaluation of the students and institutions and the progress of theological education. The commission appointed to consider these procedures met on 31 August 1974, and proposed the formation of one national structure: The Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College. The proposal included the sub-committees, officers (registrar and director), their job descriptions and the budget. These were approved in June 1975 and at a special meeting of the senate at Bangalore in July 1975 it was resolved to form the one national structure for theological education. A committee was appointed for a three year term, with D. Samuel Amirtham as its interim honorary director. The new structure started to function from 1 August 1975, and the 1976 senate meeting appointed Dr TV Philip as director and Rev. JT Krogh as registrar.¹¹

This brought together not only the theological colleges affiliated to the senate, but also a large number of organisations that were experimenting and articulating relevant modes of theologising in the Indian context. Several frontier groups engaged in rural, urban and industrial service were raising new questions in relation to the struggles of the people.

11. Cf. *Senate and Executive Minutes, 1975*, Appendix A, pp. 200-206, 224-230; Appendixes A1, A2, A3, pp. 231-242, 314, 315-319, 352-361.

villages, slums and industrial society. New issues for doing theology in the Indian situation and new quests in mission were aroused by such groups. Several such groups were brought in as members of the one national structure, thus helping to enrich and contextualise theological education in the colleges. To cite a relevant example for our thesis, we should point out here that the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society was one such, which made a great impact on the theological thinking and action of the BTE-SSC. A year later, the then director of CISRS, Saral K Chatterji, became the president of SSC and in his presidential report evaluated developments, saying that

The Board of Theological Education of the Senate is a very important development within the framework of the Serampore structures. Although advisory in nature, it has the strategic function of bringing together a wide variety of institutions and organisations having a common interest in theological education. For the first time more than forty five institutions...came together in the first meeting...and addressed themselves to the case of reorientations of theological education.¹²

Two years later, Dr. Saphir Athyal, in his presidential address in 1978, referred to this reorientation in terms of the need to relate theology to the political, socio-economic struggles of the people of India. He saw that the "primarily legislative and academic" functions of the SSC and the "consultative and somewhat missiological and creative" functions of the BTE-NCCI combined together, bringing a broader perspective of theological education, as

The new Board has brought into the Senate widely representative bodies other than the residential colleges, engaged in theological training such as frontier ministries, lay training, extension education, special research, etc.¹³

The result was a new thrust in theological education. The research-based and laity-based "contextually alert and theologically innovative structures" began to have closer interaction with the traditionally-based theological educational institutions. This brought a dynamic difference in the promotion of relevant theological training of the ministry.

At the setting up of the one national structure for theological education, there was an intention to review the function of the one structure after a three year period, and then at intervals of every five years. In accordance

12. See Report of the President of the Senate for the year 1975, p. 5.

13. See Report of the President of the Senate for the year 1977, pp. 3f.

with this decision of the senate, the co-ordinating committee of the SSC appointed a review committee on 30 August 1978, to review the functions of the Board of Theological Education of the SSC. The review committee consisting of Drs. Samuel Amirtham, Saphir Athyal, Russell Chandran, CD Jathanna, TV Philip, Victor Premasagar, S Mukhopadhyay, Mr. SK Chatterji and Rev. DS Sathyanarajan met on 4 January 1979 at UTC.¹⁴ Its chairman, the then president of the senate, Dr. Victor Premasagar, was conscious of the "many loose ends" that hung from what appeared a "neat" and "dynamic theological education programme and research." He particularly noted the confusion between the offices of the registrar and the director, the inability of the committee on academic administration to make its own decisions and the unhealthy bifurcation between the church and theological education. Premasagar was of the opinion that

Genuine Theological Research should emerge out of the life and work of the church, its struggle to relate the Gospel to the Indian situations taking into account the frustration and hopes of our people. The fact that these two have been separated, unconsciously contributes to research unrelated to the context or to church consultations operating without taking note of the critical research and theological formulations within the Indian context.¹⁵

Since the non-residential programmes and institutions brought into the senate were closer to the socio-economic, political and cultural struggles of people, their entry into the senate and interaction with the residential theological educationists provided a solution to this problem.

The senate no longer represented a small section of theological education, but included a whole subcontinent with responsibility for major churches and institutions throughout the country. National consultations and conferences at times undermined local issues and created an artificial academic atmosphere. What was needed was a functional set-up with emphasis on local engagement in doing theology. Premasagar related here the findings of the 1977 UTC workshop on "Doing Theology in the Indian Context."¹⁶ The future focus of the senate and board should be on assisting the theological schools, study and action centres,

14. Members present were Drs. PV Premasagar, TV Philip, CD Jathanna, Samuel Amirtham, JR Chandran, Rev D Sathyanarajan, absent with apology were Drs Saphir P. Athyal, S Mukhopadhyay and absent Mr SK Chatterji.

15. See PV Premasagar, "Future Focus of the Senate: A Paper Presented to the Review Committee on January 4, 1979, at UTC, Bangalore," p. 3.

16. Dr Victor Premasagar was a participant at the seminar along with the principals of several colleges. The author also participated in it.

to identify their priorities and deploying their resources in personnel and funds for a more relevant theological education, renewal of the ministry and action in the world.... The Senate itself... should become creative, open to new forms of theological education through the impact of the Board of Theological Education and new experiments taking place in the affiliated colleges and in the church.¹⁷

The review committee met thrice and felt after careful study that the BTE was too involved with the senate's academic matters with no time for its original aims and objectives. Creative developments were not taking shape as expected. The one national structure did not promote the anticipated wider ecumenical involvement in theological education. Hence they recommended that the senate and the board be separated as two legal entities, the senate fulfilling the functions that are enshrined in the Serampore College Act, taking responsibility for academic and research matters; and the Board of Theological Education dealing with

- (i) Accreditation of institutions not affiliated to Serampore
- (ii) Production of theological literature in general, especially in regional languages
- (iii) Promotion of professional organizations and the welfare of theological teachers and students
- (iv) Development and ecumenical integration of theological institutions and their libraries
- (v) Relations between churches and theological institutions
- (vi) Reflection and pioneering on new theological education methods and styles in relation to the needs of the country and of the churches.¹⁸

The registrar was responsible for

- i. Evaluation and affiliation of colleges
- ii. Helping raise academic standards of colleges
- iii. Curriculum development
- iv. Examination of candidates and granting of degrees
- v. M.Th. programmes and scholarships
- vi. Keeping records, minutes of the Senate meetings, preparing for Senate meetings
- vii. Other related matters.¹⁹

17. Premasagar, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

18. See Report of the Review Committee, *Senate and Executive Minutes*, 1979.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 2f.

A qualified director of the Indian Theological Research Institute was expected to serve the Senate by caring for:

- i. Promotion of theological research at a higher level, whether leading to a degree or not
- ii. Faculty formation and development
- iii. D.Th. programmes and scholarships
- iv. Production of theological literature at a higher level
- v. Coordination of information on ongoing research in various research centres and colleges
- vi. Any other related functions.²⁰

The constitution was thus drawn by 1981 and made effective from 1982. There was a definite desire to secure "the participation of church leadership in determining a relevant structure for theological education and training for ministry." BTESSC henceforth became the one national structure for theological education in India, "the enlarged Senate," "responsible for policy making on all matters related to theological education."²¹ Membership in BTE was open to institutions which were affiliated to the SSC for the purpose of preparing candidates for degrees or diplomas, and also to institutions which were involved in theological-sociological and religious research studies. The togetherness of both teaching and non-teaching institutions helped to widen theological vision of both groups. However, membership was based on certain criteria. Of institutions involved in direct theological education, the criteria considered were "relationship to Churches in India...ecumenical openness...stability of financial support and accountability, adequacy of staff, library, buildings...student strength...suitability of the programme for the Church's ministry;" and criteria for other institutions were their ecumenical character, relevance of their programme for theological education, stability of staff, finances and accountability and their "contribution to the understanding of the context for the Church's mission and ministry."²² Thus from 1983 the one national structure began to function to enable the church in India in her mission and ministry.

Growth in Ecumenical Cooperation

BTESSC brought together a fellowship of 30 theological colleges and

20. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

21. See the "Report of the Joint Committee on the BTE Senate and the Council of Serampore College on the One National Structure," Minutes of the BTESSC, 1983.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

16 study/research, developmental and extension education organisations consisting of varying theological emphases. It identified the polarization that was forced on Indian theological education (evangelical and ecumenical) as "alien" and imposed by "the World Evangelical Fellowship," a

Polarisation caused by a dualistic approach to ministry – this worldly and other-worldly, material and spiritual, secular and sacred, conservative and liberal, evangelical and ecumenical, personal and social.²³

"United action" and "a holistic approach to theological education" were seen as "the need of the hour" in the Indian church, as Gnana Robinson and Henry Wilson identify in their paper "Perspective in Theological Education."²⁴ In a survey of "Ecumenical Cooperation in Theological Education in India," Wilson narrated the numerous cooperative attempts that developed in post-Independence decades. At Bangalore, United Theological College and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram brought together Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars in the field of the history of religion and philosophy to pioneer academic co-operation plans from 1975. Mutual recognition of staff through staff exchange and faculty seminars enriched the two colleges. St. Peter's Seminary took initial steps of cooperation in the mid-eighties.

In Kerala, the joint programme of the Kerala United Theological Seminary (Trivandrum), Mar Thoma Theological Seminary and Orthodox Theological Seminary (both of Kottayam) in the "Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture in Kerala" (FFRRC) attempted to invite the Catholic St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary of Vadavathor and St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary of Alwaye to become participating members in FFRRC.

In West Bengal, Serampore College and Bishop's College together developed the North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS), and sought cooperation with the Morning Star College of Barrackpore. In Allahabad, the Satyaniketan Theological College planned cooperation with the St. Joseph's Seminary of Allahabad and Vidya Jyothi of Delhi. At Poona, Union Biblical Seminary and Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth were expecting to cooperate in their Biblical Studies departments. In Madras, Gurukul Theological College, Sacred Heart Seminary and Sathya

23. See Gnana Robinson and HS Wilson, "Perspectives in Theological Education," *AJT*, 2:1, 1988, pp. 69–78, especially p. 73.

24. See HS Wilson, "Ecumenical Cooperation in Theological Education in India: A Survey," *ibid.*, pp. 38–44.

Nilayam and in Madurai, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and Arul Kadai Theological College were expecting similar cooperation. Already the Protestants and Catholics together had jointly instituted a Chair on Christianity at Madurai Kamaraj University. Thus we note progress in cooperation and in the idea of federated faculties of theology for effective theological education in India.

Further developments and growth of the Serampore-affiliated colleges was concisely explained by DS Sathyaranjan, the registrar of the Senate of Serampore College in his "Sharing of and Planning for Resources – A Survey: Theological Education in India."²⁵

There were two major developments within the BTE-SSC, which we should mention to aid our understanding of the search for and journey into relevance in theological education in India; the debate on the "Theological Focus of the Senate of Serampore College" and the "National Study of Priorities in Theological Education."

Theological Focus of the BTE-SSC

It was in the year 1978 that a query into the theological focus of the Senate of Serampore College was felt a necessity by theological teachers. The first national conference of theological teachers met at the Ecumenical Christian Centre. They recommended that the senate should have a theological focus.²⁶ Accordingly, during the Senate and BTE meetings, Drs. Frank Collison and Arvind Nirmal of UTC faculty presented a paper on the theological focus of the senate, and a response was made by Revs. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden of TAFTEE. These papers identify the debate on the theological focus of the senate, as interpreted by representatives of the traditional theological institutions and those of field-based non-residential programmes.²⁷ Whereas Collison and Nirmal emphasised the need for a relevant and "revisionist" theology of mission which would take the context seriously by constantly re-examining and revising what was understood as the church's mission, Samuel and Sugden emphasised the need for such a theology to emerge from the Scripture, the givenness of which they thought was diluted by Collison

25. See DS Sathyaranjan, "Sharing of and Planning for Resources: A Survey, Theological Education in India," *ibid.*, pp. 53–64.

26. See a report of this BTE-sponsored conference by TV Philip, "National Conference of Theological Teachers, Bangalore, 5–9 June 1978," *RS*, XXV:3, September 1978, pp. 73–93.

27. See Collison and Nirmal's paper "A Theological Focus for the Senate of Serampore College," and the paper submitted in response to it by Samuel and Sugden, at the 1979 Senate meetings.

and Nirmal. The gospel, noted Collison and Nirmal, "is the perception of the way God's power is at work in each *Sitz im Leben*." Various perceptions were obtained at various times in the West, and those perceptions dominated the different streams of the church in India, providing for a wide variety of theological emphases or foci. They argued that

The starting point of the theological enterprise in India should be...based not on already formulated theological propositions but on the life experience of the Indian people. The complexity of the fullness of human life in India today should be the starting point of our theological enterprise....A theological focus of the Senate should have this "this worldly" bias.²⁸

Needed, they thought, was a "hermeneutical key" found from the socio-economic, religious and political life situation in India, with which to interpret the Scripture. Though Collison and Nirmal's plea for a new hermeneutic was to interpret the Scripture, Samuel and Sugden criticised them as sociologically-oriented and as deriving their gospel from the context rather than from the "given" Scripture.²⁹ Though Samuel and Sugden were involved in the short-lived *Gospel in Context* pursuit³⁰ as "radical evangelicals" within evangelicalism, they stayed committed to and argued here in favour of the evangelical position on the Scripture and its authority for life and practice. Thus the debate on the theological focus of the Senate ultimately revolved around the view one took of the authority of the Scripture, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments accepted as the canon of faith. In this sense, it went back to the classic tension between the evangelicals and the modernist/situationalists.³¹

28. Collison and Nirmal, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

29. Samuel and Sugden's "Response paper," *op. cit.*

30. An international group of evangelical scholars who appreciated the cultural aspect of human life and the relation between the gospel and culture, linked together in publishing the periodical *Gospel in Context*. This trend became popular after ICOWE, Lausanne, 1974. LCWE sponsored a consultation on "Gospel and Culture" at Bermuda in 1978, the report of which was published as Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 2. The periodical was short-lived. Part of the group carried on under the new name Partnership in Mission (PIM).

31. Influences of Joseph Fletcher's *Situation Ethics* were noticeable among the modernist theologians. Traditionalists disagreed with the trend. Theological teachers at UTC were open to Western and non-Western theological thought experiments, and hence boldly referred to them and used those thought categories.

The search for such a new hermeneutical key led the BTE-SSC to organise an All India Consultation on Biblical Hermeneutics in 1980 at Kottayam, the papers and reports of which were published in the *Indian Journal of Theology*, July-December 1982 issue. Participants from tribal areas pointed out the need to "take note of the peculiar nature of the tribal traditions and culture with their emphasis on oral tradition, sense of community and search for identity in the context of Indian nationhood." Hence BTE-SSC sponsored further regional seminars; "Primal Vision and Hermeneutics in North-East India" in November 1981 at Shillong and "Hermeneutics Consultation in Central Tribal Belt of India" in March 1984.³² SSC published the book *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* in 1987.³³ Later Stanley Samartha elaborated on this search for a new hermeneutics from a religiously plural setting in a series of his essays.³⁴

Could all affiliated colleges be forced into accepting one theological view? The question became urgent as the senate was now in the process of allowing a status of autonomy to colleges.³⁵ Would the senate allow each college to hold its own theological and Christological views, "many of them arising out of soil alien to this land," and present to India "blurred, inconsistent or sometimes even conflicting images" of Christ and the gospel, thus confusing and causing "a lack of clarity of vision for the Church in India?" This was the concern of Collison and Nirmal, who held that while the senate took in a wide variety of colleges and programmes, creating a theological pluralism, it should retain a clear theological focus of its own. "The value of the Senate lies in its academic and theological creativity, rather than in academic administration," and hence they urged that the senate should be clear and aware of its own position, theological focus and function. This, they said, was of vital importance, as the senate

32. See the paper and reports in the *IJT*, July-December 1987 issue, and a report edited by CK Paul Singh, Ranchi, 1986.

33. Written by Daniel J Adams in the Indian Theological Library Series.

34. SJ Samartha, *The Search for New Hermeneutics in Asian Christian Theology*, Bangalore: BTE-SSC, 1987.

35. Already the United Theological College had this autonomy, which meant that it could make its own curricular experiments, set its own examination papers and hold a certain institutional individuality about itself, though affiliated to and governed by the Senate of Serampore College. On the basis of this autonomy of UTC, there was a rigorous consideration of autonomy for other larger B.D. level colleges. This would have included the Union Biblical Seminary also, the point at which there was much concern among ecumenical thinkers who held that the evangelicals reflected a colonial Christianity over against the indigenous – hence relevant – Christianity developing amidst ecumenicals. See Collison and Nirmal *op. cit.*, p. 2.

during this time "appointed a theological commission assisted by Social Scientist(s) to go into the question of relevant ministries for the Indian Church."³⁶ There was definite agreement among the member colleges and institutions as to the need for such a theological focus and clarity. This was further sought at a BTE-SSC consultation in 1987 on the "Vision and Focus for Theological Education in India Today," the papers and reports of which were published in the April 1988 issue of the *Asia Journal of Theology*.³⁷ Simultaneously there was also a study of "Spiritual Formation in Theological Education," comparing the ways in which different colleges developed an atmosphere and ethos to enable genuine spirituality among its students.³⁸

National Study of Theological Education 1978–1984 by BTE-SSC Commission on Priorities in Theological Education

The several studies of theological education conducted in India during the previous decades gave useful insight for "the continuing effort to help the theological colleges to provide a responsible and relevant training for Christian ministry," but became dated. They left a lacuna as they did not "attempt to secure input from a wide variety of both laity and clergy regarding issues for Christian ministry or sufficient empirical data for the making of reliable generalisations."³⁹ None of the previous studies on theological education in India were as extensive as what the Board of

36. *Ibid.*, p. 2. The next section in this book deals with this commission studying priorities in theological education.

37. The consultation met 18–21 March 1987 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield. See *Asia Journal of Theology*, 2:1, April 1988, for the papers and reports such as: Henry S Wilson, "Ecumenical Cooperation in Theological Education in India: A Survey," pp. 38–44; Gnana Robinson and HS Wilson, "Perspective in Theological Education," pp. 69–78; DS Sathyanarajan, "Sharing of and Planning for Resource: A Survey," pp. 53–64; Somen Das, "Prospects for Ecumenical Cooperation, Formation and Sharing in Theological Education in India," pp. 45–50; EC John, "The Existing Ecumenical Context in India," pp. 29–32; DC Gorai, "Renewal of the Church for Mission and Role of the Theological Education," pp. 92–97 and "A Statement of the Consultation on 'Vision and Focus for Theological Education in India Today'," pp. 119–122.

38. Principals of different colleges prepared and presented papers pertaining to campus life, opportunities for worship, prayer, intercession and personal and corporate spiritual development of the students, at the Senate workshop. These were compiled together in a book and published for the BTESSC by its director, Dr. Henry S Wilson in 1987.

39. See "Issues and Priorities in Training for Christian Ministry," a paper by the team of social scientists who helped with the BTE-SSC national study on theological education.

Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) undertook in the year 1978. It was acclaimed as a difficult effort with "special significance in view of the fact that no such *broad-based empirical study* of theological education in India has previously been attempted."⁴⁰ BTESSC appointed "The Commission on Priorities in Theological Education" to identify major issues in theological education in India and to make recommendations for the strengthening of training for Christian ministry.

The Co-ordinating Committee...authorized the appointment...of a Commission "to study and recommend the priorities in theological education, in the light of the major issues in Christian ministry in India today and also to define the relationship between the B.T.E. and the P.T.E [Programme on Theological Education]."⁴¹

In September 1978, the commission met initially and had a group of social scientists undertake an appropriate survey and evaluation, gathering relevant statistical and critical information through research instruments and visits to selected institutions.⁴² The group of social scientists included Rev. Dr. Hunter P Mabry (teaching faculty member, UTC, Bangalore), Dr. TK Oommen (professor of sociology, Centre for the Study of Social Systems and Dean of Students, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi), Rev. Richard W Taylor (senior associate director, CISRS), Dr. John S Augustine (staff of CISRS, Bangalore) and Dr. CT Kurien (director of Madras Institute of Development Studies). They met in late 1978 and early 1979 and made a comprehensive research proposal in January 1979 to the commission, which was endorsed and placed before the Board of Theological Education. When the board approved and funded the proposed research, they started their work in March 1979 and made their first report in January 1980.

With the help of this team of social scientists the commission gathered a large volume of relevant data from theological teachers, theological students (residential and external), heads of churches, pastors, theologically trained women and members of local congregations of different denominations, social backgrounds and cultural situations, and from a content analysis of theological curricula, syllabi and journals. Six years of intensive study of existing theological schools affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College produced many valuable reports which were sent to member colleges and

40. The emphasis on "broad based" is the author's. See "Commission on Priorities in Theological Education, Report No. 1" on the "work done by the team of Social Scientists," February 1980 – January 1981, p. 6.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

42. *Ibid.*

church leaders for their study and comments.

At the time there were 25 Senate-affiliated colleges offering a theological degree programme in India. The social scientists visited about half of them, and also a non-affiliated Protestant theological college and a Roman Catholic Seminary, getting to know their programme and ethos. Through these "sensitization visits" they took samples of colleges serving the tribals and non-tribals, one language group in vernacular medium and many language groups through English medium, regional and national, denominational and interdenominational, B.Th. level and those which were at B.R.E., B.D., and post-graduate levels. They interviewed the principals or acting principals, faculty members and students. A research assistant visited all the twenty-five affiliated colleges to collect information through the use of questionnaires.

A 22-page questionnaire for theological teachers was completed by 149 (55.6%) out of a total of 266 teachers, providing more than 3000 pages of data.⁴³ The Association of Theological Teachers in India helped with the research process. A 26-page questionnaire for theological students was completed by 712 out of a total 863 eligible⁴⁴ students (83%), providing more than 18,000 pages of data. These responses were coded, data cards prepared and computer analysis undertaken.

Five theological (basically Protestant) journals were taken for analysis of content, for trends and emphasis in theological thinking and research. Dr. George Mathew, with his qualifications both in theology and social sciences, undertook this analysis. The journals studied were: *Bangalore Theological Forum*, *Indian Church History Review*, *Indian Journal of Theology*, *Religion and Society* and *TRACI/ETS Journal*.⁴⁵

A team of seven theologically qualified persons worked on a content analysis of syllabi used for courses being taught in theological colleges. Initially, an attempt was made to analyse the syllabi for various courses at both B.Th and B.D. levels. But since it involved an extremely complex procedure, it was replaced with a modest effort to study two courses in each branch of study at the B.D. level. The persons, branches and courses

43. A total of 278 teachers' names and addresses were submitted by the Association of Theological Teachers in India (ATTI) to the commission, of whom 12 were ineligible to complete the questionnaire (one had died, two left India, six were on study leave abroad, three were unavailable), leaving 266 respondents.

44. Only students in their first and final year of studies were eligible to complete the questionnaires.

45. See Dr. George Mathew's report "Content Analysis of Theological Journal in India," *RS*, XXVIII:4, December 1981, pp. 67-92.

studied are listed below when we discuss the commission's report on curricula and syllabi.⁴⁶

The reports presented by the social scientists were:

1. Work done by the team of social scientists; Feb 1980-January 1981
- 2-4. Study of theological teachers in India – part I–III (see *RS XXXIV*:2, June 1987, pp 1–76)
5. Content analysis of theological journals in India (see *RS XXVIII*:4, December 1981, pp 67–92)
- 6 and 12. Content analysis of theological curricula and syllabi (see *RS XXXII*:3, September 1985)
7. Theological students in India
8. A summary "Status of the Project" report
9. Heads of the churches
10. External students and views of different constituencies on selected issues
11. Theologically trained women (See *RS XXXI*:3, September 1984)

There were yet other studies: 1) *Heads of churches*. An extensive 22-page questionnaire was sent to 117 heads (bishops and presidents) of churches; 40% responded within the year. 2) *Pastors*. 1271 pastors and their wives in thirty-six districts were selected for study through questionnaires and interviews, representing rural, urban, tribal, non-tribal, pre-dominantly Christian and pre-dominantly non-Christian areas. The 28-page and 4-page questionnaires for pastors and their wives brought a 34% response within the year. 3) *Laity*. Twenty-five congregations representing a wide diversity of local situations (urban, rural, slum, tribal, majority Christian and minority Christian settings) were chosen for the study; 8 teams of investigators focused on identifying the kinds of expectations held by lay persons regarding the role of the pastor in the local church and community and how this related to training for Christian ministry. 4) *The culture of theological education*. Six senate-affiliated colleges were taken as samples to study the distinctive ethos of the colleges and their relations to the programme of training and the type of ministerial leadership expectations prevalent among graduates. 5) *Financial structure of theological education*. 6) Also research was done among independent and external students who trained theologically but did not serve in pastoral settings; to decipher the i.) extent to which

46. See the report of this study published in *RS*, XXXII:3, September 1985.

independent students are absorbed into ministry; ii.) the type of training sought by external students and their expectations for ministerial involvements; and iii.) ways in which those in non-pastoral roles use their training. 447 external students were contacted for this study.

The first set of reports of the commission in 1981 listed above were followed with "The Preliminary Report of the National Commission on the Priorities in Theological Education," circulated by the then-chairman of the commission, Saral K Chatterji, director of CISRS. It summarised the findings of all the various studies. The Board of Theological Education then appointed a new commission, headed by the Rev. Dr. Gnana Robinson, principal of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary. This commission met in July and December of 1984 and developed a concise report and recommendation for the consideration of the BTESSC.⁴⁷ The recommendations made by the study of the social scientists and the interpretative summary by Gnana Robinson, Christopher Duraisingh, and Thomas Thangaraj in 1984, were circulated among the member institutions for their study.

These studies brought to light numerous facts which indicated the way theological education thus far had remained ineffective on the one hand and unjust on the other. Ineffectiveness got revealed in the studies on qualifications and work-load of teachers, curricula, course syllabi and their relevance to the context; and unjust patterns became visible when sex and caste discrimination were proved from the data. "Sex and social origins are two major issues in the current situation of theological education in BTE-related colleges." Situations improved, but cannot be measured for lack of data from the past. But still "women have only marginal opportunities in the teaching and training programmes" and "persons from high caste backgrounds enjoy disproportionate benefits – both as students and as teachers." "A major liability of theological education in India is its institutions' sexism and institutional casteism." These findings raised the crucial issues of

1. What place women should have in theological education
2. How opportunities for persons from different social backgrounds can be made more equitable, and
3. To what extent an understanding of theological education and Christian ministry have been distorted by the over-representation of persons from higher-caste backgrounds who are almost exclusively male.⁴⁸

47. Much of the information in this section is taken from the files of material sent for this study in 1984 by the Robinson group.

48. "Report of the Commission on Priorities in Theological Education," 1983, p. 2.

Theological Education and Sex Discrimination

Social scientists who were involved in the national study of theological education documented the fact that "theological education in India is almost exclusively a male domain," "virtually a monopoly of men," "male enterprise producing an almost exclusively male ministry." 95% of students, 90% of the teachers and 94% of the governing board members of senate-affiliated colleges were male; and in several colleges all three groups were 100% male. This was seen as reflecting the situation in Indian societal and church leadership.⁴⁹ Among theological teachers in Senate-affiliated colleges,

Out of the 266 teachers...only 27 or 10% are women. Among these 27, several are part-time, 13 are non-Indian, and the majority are connected with either a single theological discipline – Christian Education – or with courses for wives.⁵⁰

None of the colleges had a plan for the recruitment of women teachers. Among theological students in senate-affiliated colleges, only 5% were women. Whereas 48% of the 95% male students enrolled were in B.D. programmes, only 34% of the 5% female students were registered for B.D. programmes. This worked out roughly at one woman student entering a B.D. programme for every 23 males. Male predominance was more exclusive at the pastoral level, as the research findings noted no women pastors amidst the 1300 male pastors in 36 administrative districts selected for study. Absence of women was noted on the governing boards of most colleges and editorial boards of theological journals such as *Bangalore Theological Forum*, *Indian Church History Review* and *Indian Journal of Theology*.

In the forties, when the Ranson study was made for the Committee on Theological Education of the National Council, and in the fifties, when the Harrison study took an evaluative look at the progress in the ten year period, the whole arena of theological education was a male enterprise. The Harrison report did refer to Christa Seva Vidyalaya, an ecumenical training programme for women based at the campus of Women's Christian College, Madras. But it was not training candidates for pastoral,

49. Information cited in this section is taken from the following; "Report No. 11: Theologically Trained Women" published in *RS*, XXXI:3, September 1984, pp. 3–26; and its earlier mimeographed preliminary report, "Report of the Commission on Priorities in Theological Education," 1983.

50. Quoted in "Preliminary Report No. 2, Study on Theological Teachers in India – Part I," p. 1; published in *RS*, XXXIV:2, June 1987, p. 5.

theological leadership to the churches. Both Ranson and Harrison reports "neglected to make a systematic enquiry" into the place and role of women in ministry.⁵¹ This sort of neglect is questioned by contemporary women. In the eighties the theologically-trained women of India began organizing themselves to represent women concerns to church leaders and to demand their rights within the church and its ministry. We noted that they formed their Association of Theologically Trained Women in India. Many church leaders as well as theological educators in the Serampore-affiliated colleges were open to ATTWI. The senate took women representatives on its council and Board of Theological Education. Changes were inevitable and found momentum.

In the seventies, the national study collaborated with the new born Association of Theologically Trained Women in India and developed a 18-page questionnaire, which was sent to 212 theologically trained women. Responses were received from 118 theologically trained women (nearly 56% of those contacted). The fact that 80% of them were under the age of 35 (30% below 30 and 50% between 30–35), a relatively youthful profile, indicated "a trend toward an increasing number of women undertaking theological training in recent years," i.e., in the sixties and seventies, and the trend continued to accelerate in the eighties.⁵² The respondents were 99% Indian; 64% married, 35% single and 1% widowed; 63% South Indian, 16% non-tribal North Indian, 3% tribal North Indian, 15% tribal North-East Indian; and denominationally 23.2% Baptist, 22.4% CSI, 12.1% Mar Thoma, 12.1% Methodist (i.e., the American wing which did not merge into CSI/CNI), 9.5% Lutheran and 6% CNI. Theological training for women was almost negligible in proportion to male in the Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian (that which did not merge into CSI/CNI) traditions.⁵³ Motivating factors which led women into theological education, facilitating and obstructing elements, the work situation, aspirations and values were analysed from the data gathered from the responses.⁵⁴ An interesting observation made was that a third of the male clergy and church leaders were neutral and negative towards women entering ministry, while two-thirds were supportive.⁵⁵

42.3% of the responding theologically trained women felt that their theological training was not adequately utilised by the church. 75.2%

51. See "Theologically Trained Women," *RS*, XXXI:3, September 1984, p. 3.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

53. See Table 1 on the Denominational Background of TTW, *ibid.*, pp. 4f.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 10ff.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

were employed, 39.5% in some capacity in the local church, 35.8% in parachurch agencies such as schools, hostels, hospitals and similar institutions, 14.8% in Bible schools and theological colleges, 9.9% in secular jobs. Of the 24.8% unemployed, a vast majority desired employment and only 6% expressed no desire to be employed. A vast majority were pleased that they did theological studies and desired further training. Dissatisfaction was found on the part of only an insignificant minority.⁵⁶ The more educated the women were, the higher value they placed on their role in ministry. Whereas 90% of all theologically trained women agreed that "both men and women should have equal rights in society," only 47.5% of the L.Th., G.Th., B.Th. women felt that "women should be permitted to become pastors/priests," compared to 81.4% of the B.D. graduates. Only 28.4% of the theologically trained women came from church groups which ordained women, and only 14.9% in the total held any intention or hope of ordination. Only 3.4% were ordained. 59.3% of them did not desire or see a need for ordination. 9.7% sought and were refused ordination. 25.7% belonged to churches which will not ordain them.⁵⁷

Here the very purpose of theological education is to be rethought. To some, it is only for ordinands. Hence those churches which do not ordain men or women see no need for their theological education. This is part of the problem of an imported model in theological education. 83% of the church leaders and 77% of the theological teachers see Indian theological education as suffering "from being too Western in structure and content" and purpose.⁵⁸ But once the purpose of theological education is clarified as for more than the ordained role, then there develops better openness for women to enter the field of theological education.

When the social scientists sought the opinion of theologically trained men and women on the question of social involvement, there was an overwhelming response in favour of the church's involvement in society. This was in keeping with the development of the church's thinking on her mission in India. 81% of church leaders, 89% of theological teachers and 79% of theologically trained women agreed with the statement that "Involvement in a programme to bring about social change and reflection upon this involvement should be an essential part of the theological

56. See the sections on Work Situation and Aspirations, *ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

57. See *ibid.*, pp. 20-22.

58. See Table 13: A. Focus and Content of Theological Education, point 2. *Ibid.*, p. 24; cf. John W Sadiq, "It is True that the Pattern of Ministry in India is Far too Western," in "The Future of Theological Education Fund," p. 3, TEF Archives, Geneva.

education process." That the theological colleges should involve themselves actively in society in support of the oppressed, and thereby set an example for the church's involvement in society was acceptable to 84% of the teachers and 74% of the theologically trained women. But the response of church leaders here took a nose-dive to 58%.⁵⁹ They, after all, were to keep the status quo. By their very office they could not be as radical as some theologians and theological educators.

Such width in involvement would then open more opportunities for women who enter the field of theological education to be able to serve the cause of social change in the name of the mission of the church. At the 1987 "Vision and Focus of Theological Education" consultation, the BTE-SSC resolved to enhance the role and involvement of women in theological education in India.⁶⁰ In keeping, the senate decided to see many women do their higher level doctoral degrees and to become theological teachers.⁶¹ As more and more "Women, the Ignored Asset,"⁶² enter theological education and find their rightful place in the ministry and mission of the church, Indian theological education is moving towards a healthy holistic future with the vision of equal opportunity for the daughters of Eve and the sons of Adam.

Theological Education and Social Discrimination

That "one of the greatest liabilities in Indian Society – that of caste – is also a liability in theological education" was proved by the data collected by the social scientists who led the national study on theological education.⁶³ The present structure of theological education in the senate-affiliated colleges disproportionately serves persons from higher caste backgrounds.⁶⁴ Among theological teachers holding earned doctorates, persons from upper caste and backward caste backgrounds are over-represented, and persons from scheduled caste and tribal backgrounds

59. See Table 13:D2, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

60. See the statement of the BTE-SSC consultation on "Vision and Focus for Theological Education in India Today," 18–21 March 1987, ECC, Whitefield, *Asia Journal of Theology*, 2:1, April 1988, pp. 119–122.

61. See the BTE-SSC resolutions of February 1988, Aizawl, wherein there were definite plans to promote women in theological education. The Programme on Theological Education of the WCC also committed itself to promote women in doctoral-level studies in theology, as reported by Samuel Amirtham.

62. See Nalini Arles, "Women, the Ignored Asset," *TRACI Journal*, 21, December 1981, pp. 41–45. Cf. Aruna Gnanadasan, "Human Rights and Women's Concerns," *RS*, XXVIII:1, March 1981, pp. 14–24.

63. See "Report of the Commission on Priorities in Theological Education," 1983, p. 2.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

are under-represented. Since research and publication is undertaken by those with advanced training, and since the upper caste and backward caste persons are the majority, research and publishing is done disproportionately by them.

Persons of tribal background are more represented among teachers with B.D. qualifications. The research finding among theological teachers revealed the following:

Theological Qualifications by Social Origins⁶⁵

Social Orgins	BD	MTh	PhD/DTh
Upper Caste	21%	50%	29%
Backward Caste	27%	46%	27%
Scheduled Caste	32%	50%	18%
Tribal	54%	42%	4%

Among students, there seemed to be a "dual system" of theological education in practice. B.Th. level colleges are filled with students from scheduled caste and tribal background; whereas students of upper and backward caste background are over-represented in the B.D. level colleges.

Type of Training Programmes, by Social Origin⁶⁶

Social Origins	BTh/GTh	5 yr BD	3-4 yr BD
Upper Caste	39%	13%	48%
Backward Caste	44%	11%	45%
Scheduled Caste	62%	6%	32%
Tribal	70%	3%	27%
Other	50%	19%	31%

Among theologically trained women, too, there are more persons from upper and backward caste background.

Social Origins	Theol. Trained Women	Theol. Students ⁶⁷
Upper Caste	36.0%	19.8%
Backward Caste	9.3%	19.3%
Scheduled Caste	17.5%	25.1%
Tribal	26.7%	30.0%
Others	10.5%	5.8%

65. See "Study of Theological Teachers in India," *RS*, XXXIV:2, June 1987, p. 12.

66. See Report No. 7, "Theological Students in India," p. 2.

67. See "Theologically Trained Women," *RS*, XXXI:3, September 1984, p. 5.

There were definite recommendations made by the national study to the senate that preference be given to candidates from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe backgrounds for M.Th. and D.Th. level admissions with scholarships. It also sought the sponsoring agencies to provide scholarships for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students at B.Th. and B.D. levels. The desire to counteract "institutional casteism" was promoted as a result of this study.

Content Analysis of Theological Curricula and Syllabi

Report number 6 in 1981 brought together the preliminary findings, and after five years, in 1986 report number 12 brought together a detailed report of the study made by the social scientists.⁶⁸ Seven senate-affiliated colleges (five from the south and two from the north) were selected and their curricula were studied. Hunter Mabry, as coordinator of the study, compiled the findings on theological curricula.⁶⁹ General observations made included the fact that all the colleges used more class hours than suggested by the senate. They regarded "the Senate requirement as too low for achieving the objectives they have set for themselves." While some colleges took three years to cover the requirements, others took three years and a term to four years for the B.D. programme, depending on the amount of time taken for study of local/regional culture and society and their implications for ministry. The differences were vast in that some used 600 (50%) more class hours, some 100% and in the case of one college 2200 (183%) additional class hours to cover the courses. The quantum and length of time spent in practical work also varied greatly, from 22 hours to 202; three to ten times more than senate-required minimum. A thesis, according to the senate, was optional, and when written would carry a weighting equal to 8% of the total required class hours. But colleges only gave 6 or 7% weightage, in some cases a mere 3%.⁷⁰ The amount of time given to branch content also varied, mainly dependent on the "academic standard or emphasis felt desirable by the college....more attention to the study of regional culture and society and...personal formation."⁷¹ "Optional Courses" were listed but the choice was made by the staff and not students. An overall rigidity was found

68. See "Report No. 12 on Work Done By the Team of Social Scientists: Content Analysis of Theological Curricula and Syllabi," mimeographed and sent on behalf of the social scientists by their coordinator Hunter P. Mabry, 10 January 1986.

69. See Hunter P. Mabry, "Part I: Content Analysis of Theological Curricula" in *ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.

imposed on the curriculum on account of the required course taking 68 to 76% of the time in some and 89% in others; and the limited number of teachers being unable to offer many optional courses.⁷² Courses in Christian ethics received marginal attention.⁷³ The following table illustrates branch content required by the senate and found in select colleges represented by A to G:⁷⁴

Area	Senate	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. Percentage of class hours required in each branch in a prescribed course								
Old Testament:	13%	13%	14%	11%	18%	12%	13%	11%
New Testament:	13	13	16	11	16	13/20	21	15
Hist. of Christianity	8	8	10	9	21	10	8	7
Christian Theology	13	8	13	14	12	14	8	8
Christian Ethics	-	4	-	2	2	2	2	3
Religion/Philosophy	8	8	10	21	5	12/15	11	8
Christian Ministry	13	13	10	21	9	12	15	14
General	-	-	3	11	6	-	6	7
Total in above	68%	68%	68%	76%	89%	75/85%	84%	73%
2. Optional Courses								
Total	32%	32%	32%	24%	11%	25/15%	16%	27%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Theological Syllabi

Circulars sent to the principals of Senate-affiliated and accredited colleges solicited copies of the course syllabi used for teaching the introductory courses and two other subjects in each branch of theological study. As noted earlier, when the task was found to be complex, the study was confined to the introductory course and one other course in each branch of study, taught at the BD level in a select group of seven Senate-affiliated colleges. The theological teachers who did the study on behalf of the National Study Commission on Priorities in Theological Education of the BTESSC, the branches and courses studied were⁷⁵

Babu Rao	Old Testament	OT Introduction; OT Theology
MP John	New Testament	NT Introduction; NT Theology
Christopher Furtado	History of Christianity	Introduction; History of Christianity in India

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 7 and 69 (point no. 3).

73. *Ibid.*, p. 69 (point no. 5).

74. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

75. See note no. 8 above.

Christopher Duraisingh	Theology	Introduction; Person and Work of Christ
Somen Das	Christian Ethics	Introduction; Any course
Herbert Jai Singh	Religions	Introduction; Hinduism
Abraham Kuruvilla	Christian Ministry	Worship; Life and Work of the Christian Minister

The analytical schema used for analysis of courses in each branch covered fifteen areas, listed in the report made in January 1986 by the commission.⁷⁶

Relevant recommendations came out of the study. Emphasis was laid on the need for course syllabi to clearly indicate the course objectives, course outline, bibliography, course work to be done by students in terms of reading and other written assignments, and the modes of evaluation. The need for evaluation to be in direct link with the stated objective and the need for the reading list to include up-to-date scholarship were also emphasised. Recommendation was made that staff workshops be held for each branch in order for the staff to raise and discuss concerns that emerge from within the Indian setting for their specific fields of teaching. Books available were either non-Indian or dated. Hence the need for collecting recent articles in periodicals (particularly by Indian authors reflecting Indian concerns) into up-to-date bibliographies was identified as urgent. It was recommended to assign summer projects to staff with the provision of needed facilities and honorariums in order to bring together such bibliographical aids to be shared with all the colleges.⁷⁷

In the branch of the history of Christianity, recommendations included the need for an adequate introduction to the study of history, an updating of information up to the contemporary period, topical studies on issues that are of vital importance to the Indian church (such as caste, indigenisation, nationalism, etc.) from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In the branch of theology, the recommendation was to hold workshops for teachers of theology and to equip them with the

new orientation to theology at the global level, particularly in the Third World....To work through the relation between theology and other disciplines, particularly the social sciences, and help students to theologize in the context of contemporary socio-economic and religio-cultural realities in India.⁷⁸

76. See report no. 12, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

77. See *ibid.*, p. 70.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Noting that only a few colleges gave an introductory course in Christian ethics, and that there was no opportunity for further study in ethics, it was recommended to hold teachers' workshops to enable persons teaching the subject to systematically work on matters of methodology, structure and content for courses in ethics in relation to skills that should be developed in students. Since several colleges did not teach courses in Christian ethics, the need to train teachers for each college was noted as a priority. Similar were the concerns in terms of teaching Religions.

In the branch of practical theology dealing with Christian ministry, the senate BD curriculum required two courses out of the following: Christian education, church administration, counselling, evangelism, homiletics, mission and worship. There was no introductory course. Hence there was no assurance that each student would be introduced to the full range of concerns in Christian ministry. Hence it was recommended to review this situation and to develop "an integrated course...for introducing the student to ministry in the church and society." An "Urgent need" for a "teachers' workshop to review the *newer orientations to ministry in church and society*" and "to examine *newer ecumenical understandings*" in terms of principles of worship, biblical bases, liturgical forms, denominational practices and historical evaluation were emphasised.⁷⁹ A result was the introduction of an M.Th. degree in "Social Analysis" as a new area of study, to provide resource persons and teachers to train future clergy as well as the laity in a clearer vision of their mission in contemporary society.

Here we note the enlarged consciousness of society and the rapid social changes in society, the emphasis on "contextualization" and "doing theology in context," and contemporary trends in mission thinking, all having an immediate effect on theological education in India. Ministry is not seen as within and for the church, but as definitely turned towards society, as world-directed ministry.

In all branches the need for up-to-date bibliography with more Indian writings was emphasised. This was because, "except for one case, all bibliographies reviewed consisted largely – in some cases entirely – of imported materials by foreign authors." The proportion by Indian authors was perhaps more than in an earlier period, but further encouragement was needed to aid "domestic production of theological literature through a research and development programme to provide for more 'import substitution' in theological education." The Christian Students' Library

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 72f. The emphasis is the author's to identify the way that newer developments in theology in context were taking root in Indian theological education.

Series, The Indian Theological Library Series and the Regional Text-book Programme were helpful in making a contribution in this direction. But it was recommended by the study that

However, more tangible encouragement to qualified persons – in the form of leave with salary and supporting facilities – is needed and would be an important step toward overcoming a rather heavy dependency, in most cases, on foreign theological literature.⁸⁰

BTESSC continued to interact with the churches, colleges and institutions for ever-improving relevant forms of theological education for the training of the ministry of the church in India in order that she might fulfill her mission in the Indian setting. Theological education was perceived as needing new perspectives always. From the many consultations and study reports, Gnana Robinson and Henry Wilson identify the following perspectives as necessary:

Development Perspective

Communication Perspective

Feminist Perspective

Justice and Peace Perspective

Spiritual Perspective and

Multi-religious /cultural/ideological Perspective.⁸¹

But our study must stop here in the mid-eighties, as to go beyond would be out of the limits set for this study.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

81. See Gnana Robinson and HS Wilson, "Perspectives in Theological Education," *AJT*, 2:1, 1988, p. 76.

PART FIVE

**Growth in Relevant
Understanding of Mission,
Ministry and Theological
Education in a Church and
a Seminary**

**Church of South India
and
Tamilnadu Theological Seminary**

Preface to Part Five

Systematic and dogmatic theologians are often set aside with an evasive criticism of their "ivory tower" existence, mostly in the cool climates of the northern hemisphere.¹ The activist in the dry, hot, populous surroundings of the southern hemisphere demands contextual relevancy in his mission and ministry.² Is the theological education of the Indian church breaking loose from the "Latin Captivity"?³ Is it in mere theory or is it seen in practice at the grassroots level?

We noted how the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College was in consistent interaction with the churches and the National Christian Council of India, with study structures, action-

1. Such criticism is popular and could be cited from volumes of literature. See Klaus Klostermaier's description of the theologians quoted (from his *Hindu and Christian in Vrindavan*, 1969, pp. 41-47) in Eric J Sharpe, *Faith Meets Faith*, London: SCM, 1977, p. 131.

2. The plea for practical theology and earth-bound interpretation and the social setting as determinative factors in the new hermeneutics is heard predominantly from the Southern hemisphere. The Latin Americans led the way through their contribution of Liberation Theology, and Africans and Asians further it. MM Thomas' "Salvation as Humanization," and his link with social action groups are valuable contributions to the social involvement of the church. The Ecumenical Association of the Third-World Theologians is relating theology to the basic facts of third-world realities. See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973; J Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology from a Revolutionary Situation*, Philadelphia, 1975; JL Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976; JE Weir, "Liberation Theology Comes of Age," *Expository Times*, 98, 1986, pp. 3-9; see other Orbis books from EATWOT conferences, such as Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella (eds.), *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Underside of History*, 1976 and *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, 1983.

3. We here refer to the cultural and theological subjectivity that the churches in the rest of the world have suffered because of the dominance of old church missions and their theologies, which Robin Boyd identified as a Latin captivity. See his book *India and the Latin Captivity of the Church: The Cultural Context of the Gospel*, London: CUP, 1974.

oriented programmes and with the member colleges. It also drew from the world community through developments in the World Council of Churches. Influences from specifically evangelical structures were seen to have a wide effect on the churches and member institutions, and thus their concerns often obtained central attention. The effects of post-Independence growth in the Indian church in her concepts of the mission of the church, the ministry of the church in its plurality and the training of the whole church including specialist leaders, was significant, as we showed.

"Nation Building" and "Evangelization" were the two guiding forces shaping the church towards growth in relevance to the Indian situation. We noted that this was a continuing process of "being relevant" to the situation, which portrayed kaleidoscopic changes within the set framework of the traditional old culture of India. Whereas we noted national developments in macro-level consultations and reports, the authenticity of it emerges only as we find proofs of the ideas, views and concepts actually influencing micro-level developments in local churches and in the lives of people.

We now turn to take note of this authenticity in the life of a church and a seminary. The Church of South India is a major example of indigenous growth in unity and mission.⁴ We shall study her as an example of nationwide developments in mission, ministry and theological education. Of the regional colleges that serve the Church of South India, we take the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary to illustrate the way Indian theological educational institutions are restructuring themselves to make sense of the gospel of an incarnate Christ in a setting of economic poverty, oppression and religious plurality. Inasmuch as we study these two, a church and a seminary, in the following two chapters,⁵ we see this as the tip of that which is the submerged reality about the church and theological education in India.

4. The inseparable togetherness of the concepts of "mission" and "unity" is expressed in the way Lesslie Newbigin entitled his article "The Call to Mission: A Call to Unity?" published in the volume *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays on the Nature of Mission in Honour of Bengt Sundkler*, edited by P. Beyerbaus and CF Hallencreutz, Uppsala, 1969, pp. 254-265.

5. The Church of South India is spread across the four states of South India and in Jaffna of Sri Lanka among the Tamil Indian settlement. It functions from synod headquarters at Madras and diocesan offices scattered in the cities of South India and Jaffna. Tamilnadu Theological Seminary is located at Arasaradi in Madurai. Chapters 15 and 16 deal with these.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Growth in the Self-Understanding of the Church of South India on Mission and Ministry

At Inauguration in 1947

At the point of inauguration, the churches which went into union in the Church of South India were optimistic that unity would enhance the witness of the churches in India. Witness was predominantly used at this time as a synonym to evangelism. Mission was understood to mean "evangelism," the task of proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the governing principles of the CSI the section "The Evangelistic Calling of the Church" expressed the belief that the Holy Spirit has guided the union in order that "the work of evangelization may be the more effectively fulfilled," and affirmed that

the CSI purposes ever to be mindful of its Missionary calling and prays that it may not only be greatly used of God for the Evangelism of South India, but it may also take its due share in the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of Christ's Church in other parts of the World.¹

It was proposed that one duty of the bishop was to take the lead in the evangelistic work of the diocese, promoting it both by his own example and by encouragement. Presbyters likewise were to use every opportunity to preach the gospel to non-Christians, and the laity to witness to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All the institutional activities carried out by the churches (educational, medical, agricultural, orphanage, rehabilitative and relief works) were taken for granted as subsidiary "aids to evangelism." It was too early for the Christian Church to plan the modes of involvement and participation in Indian national life in any large scale. As noted earlier, the National Christian Council did undertake to interpret the church's place in the midst of rapid social change later in 1951 in link with a world-wide study under the World

1. As earlier indicated, Bengt Sundkler outlines the early motivations, process and consummation of church union in South India, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1948. Cf. *The Constitution of the Church of South India*; RD Paul, *The First Decade: An Account of the Church of South India*, Madras: CLS, 1958, p. 107f.

Council of Churches. Only a decade later such interpretation became available for all to study in the volume *Christian Participation in Nation Building*. Articles in journals attempted to discuss the need for a Christian understanding of democracy, nationhood and citizenship, but lack of readership on the one hand, and unpreparedness for participation caused by minority communalism on the other, hindered the participation of the Christian community in this period.²

One must look into the history of the Church of South India through the next four decades to decipher the way mission and ministry were understood, the effects of the changing scenes of national and international developments in the theology of mission and ministry and the modifications of their expressions, structures and methods. For this, we shall selectively study some of the documents, minutes and reports published by the CSI during these four decades. In 1958, a helpful evaluation was made by Rajaiah D Paul through his account of the first ten years in the life of CSI, and from 1963 there is a report of the CSI Commission on Integration and Joint Action, titled *Renewal and Advance*.³ In the seventies there are examples of developments in the CSI through synod reports and minutes, such as *Church and Social Justice* and *CSI After Thirty Years*.⁴ In 1982, the CSI published an exhaustive report of its consultation on *Priorities for the Mission of the Church*;⁵ and finally in 1985, the CSI philosophy of her mission and ministry in the majority rural settings is expressed in a concise report of the Synod Relief and Development Committee.⁶ By comparing these with one another with a

2. The *Indian Journal of Theology* carried the following articles during the early fifties which indicate the type of concerns within the Christian community, though readership was very limited to share the concerns. VE Devadutt, "A Theology for Democracy," 1952:1, pp. 3ff; Chandran Devanesan, "The Church: Can it Meet the Social Challenge Today?," 1952:2, pp. 66ff; MM Thomas, "Some Views on the Ideal of a Responsible Society for India," 1952:2, pp. 70ff; VE Devadutt, "A Critique of Contemporary Democracy," 1952:2, pp. 76ff; TK Thomas, "The Idea of the Secular State," 1953:2, pp. 7-15; RW Scott, "Christian Responsibility in Indian Society," 1953:2, pp. 16ff.

3. *The First Decade*, op. cit., and *Renewal and Advance*, Madras: CLS for CSI Synod, 1963.

4. See *CSI Synod Minutes of the Working Committee and Executive Committee*, 1970, Bangalore, 1970; and the *CSI Synod of January 1978*, Kottayam, Madras: Diocesan Press, 1978.

5. Dass Babu (ed.), *Priorities for the Mission of the Church: A Report of the Consultation*, Madras: Diocesan Press for CSI Synod, 1982.

6. See John S Abraham, VP Dandin and M Azariah, *Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses*, Madras: CSI Synod Relief and Development Committee, 1985.

view to identify the thought developments, changes, omissions and additions, we shall obtain an insight into the theology of mission and ministry in the Church of South India.

Through the First Decade 1947-1956

What was stated in the constitution as the basic evangelistic purpose of the union was reaffirmed by the first synod in March 1948. RD Paul cited the constitution, chapter II paragraph 3, chapter IV rule 2, Chapter V rule 1(5) and 10, and chapter VI rules 1 and 2(b) to indicate the place of evangelism and the leadership structure for it within the CSI. After his hagiographic description of how the CSI owed "its very existence to the faith, zeal, self-sacrifice and devotion of Christian people elsewhere" and their missionaries who sacrificially "accepted the call to missionary work in India and who after coming here did not spare themselves in the service of God and of the people," Paul reports how the synod "called upon all its members, in every congregation, in every diocese, to re-dedicate themselves and their resources to fulfil the urgent need to witness by word, deed and life, to the unsearchable riches of God in Christ."⁷ It was not the clergy, but the whole church, including every member, that was expected to be involved in the mission of the church, which was "witness" and "evangelism." Ministers were to promote evangelistic work. The synod board of missions, which met in its first meeting in January 1949, took under its jurisdiction to coordinate the works of diocesan home missions, such as the Mysore Missionary Society's work in Mysore, Chamarajanagar and Talavadi, the Nandyal Missionary Association's work in Alampur Taluk of the then Hyderabad State, Dornakal's Molug Mission, Jaffna's Island Mission, South Travancore's Home Missionary Society, Central Travancore's Home Mission and the Adoor Mission and local evangelistic works of Trichinopoly, Medak and Kerala Dioceses. These were in addition to what the CSI inherited from its parent bodies, such as the South India United Church's work through the Rev. and Mrs. Sathya Joseph in Papua New Guinea. Junior missionary associations were formed in every diocese to promote missionary concern in youth.

At its second synod meetings of February 1950, the CSI was conscious that it would stand or fall by the place it gave to evangelism. The CSI gave expression to its evangelistic concerns in a variety of ways.

Through centres like Katpadi, it shows the way to economic uplift....Through Citizenship Conferences, such as that in

7. *The First Decade, op. cit.*, pp. 109f. See the whole of chapter 6, "The Gospel is Preached."

Palamcottah, it points out the Christian way to build a nation. Through medical and evangelistic camps, such as that held in Mysore Diocese....Through Ashrams, such as those conducted by the Bethel Sisters....Through Gospel bands and moonlight *kummis* as in Tinnevely....Through local festivals of worship, such as the Zion festival...in Madras, the Alwkonda *tirunala*...in Kurnool, and the Passion Play at Pasumalai.⁸

Economic uplift and citizenship were held together as part of the same scheme of concern in mission and evangelism. But they were tied to traditional services such as educational, medical and vocational training centres. By now self-support became a necessary and urgent theme for the church. Hence the synod board of missions sought means to increase the missionary giving of the churches.

The theme of the third synod in 1952 is self explanatory of the emphasis, "Indian Leadership, Self-Support and Evangelism." Trends of thought indicated that

Greater stress needs to be laid on voluntary and spontaneous evangelism, and the pastoral care of established congregations must be made more dependent on local leaders, whether ordained or lay, whose support is derived from the people they serve, instead of from Government grants...or funds from outside the diocese.⁹

This automatically brought in other emphases, such as on indigenous patterns of ministry, revival and evangelism. It is interesting to note how there developed an anticipation in the young church for "spiritual revival" as the "supreme need" and "effective remedy" for the financial and ministerial needs of the church. Hopes were for a large increase of voluntary service from local church members, together with an increase of the number of ordained clergy. Views on ministry thus far set according to imported Western patterns were now questioned. As a sub-committee led by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin reported, there was a fresh approach to the organising of "The Ministry of the Church: Ordained and Unordained, Paid and Unpaid."¹⁰

The fourth synod followed suit and considered "A New Pattern for the Church in India," wherein not only the ministry of the ordained and lay people, but the whole of worship, interpretation of Christian faith in the context of Eastern thought, the methods of evangelism among the

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 112f.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

10. See Leslie Newbigin's report in *The First Decade*, Appendix III, pp. 253f.

educated intellectuals and high castes and the use of Western missionaries in democratic India were considered. The indigenous developments are summarised in the general secretary's report, and the synod proposed a fourteen point scheme of a "New Pattern for the Church," touching on the establishing of honorary presbyters for village congregations, ordaining suitable candidates as full-time and part-time honorary presbyters, training the laity and local leaders, improving the economic background of members, evangelisation of the educated, production of books and literature in dealing with Christian faith in the Eastern setting and indigenising of worship and modes of evangelism.¹¹ The synod set up sub-committees to produce original books and apologetic literature in the vernacular, and to develop indigenous modes of worship and witness. The whole question of ministry, ministerial recruitment and training, the preparation of lay men and women, and the need for pastoral and evangelistic work among rural migrants in urban slums, were all taken up for study by the synod ministerial committee.

This trend was furthered by the next synod of 1956 when it considered the theme of "Presenting Christ to India Today." The first decade saw "a notable increase in evangelistic activity," with remarkable results and large accessions to the church. Signs of real revival were found among sections of the laity and a steady stream of recruits entered the ministry of the church. Women also took an increasing share in the work and witness of the church. By 1958, the CSI had sent the Rev. and Mrs. JT Paul Manickam to Thailand as missionaries, and added more home mission stations in Kodumudi in Coimbatore, Kamareddy in Medak, Talavadi in Mysore, work among Kurumbas in North Kerala and industrial missions in the Avadi-Ambattur areas in Madras. Yet there was a widespread unfinished evangelistic task facing the church. The intelligentsia were hardly touched; there was no work among Muslims; the laity were by far inert, paralysed and immobile.¹² The situation was not helped by the way the church's ministry was trained during this time by the theological schools and colleges. They were more keen to supply ordinands, mostly trained in the English language and in traditional patterns of minister-centred ministry imbibed from the West. Even where vernacular training was obtained, most books studied were in English, and hence a certain English-cum-Western orientation was inevitable. These we already discussed in our study of the Harrison report.

11. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 118-120 and 121f.

12. See *ibid.*, pp. 124 and 127.

Ministry in the Church of South India

Each of the uniting churches in the CSI had their own particular understanding of ministry and church administration. In union, the CSI took the best of each tradition and welded together an unthreatening new pattern for all. Bishopric, clergy and laity are the three sectors within the church, with specific functional roles. A concise understanding of the three is given in RD Paul's chapters 8 ("Episcopacy in the CSI"), 9 ("The Ordained Ministry") and 10 ("The Laity and the Church"), and also 7 ("Women in the Church").

Episcopacy

Of the uniting churches, the Anglicans believed in episcopacy as of divine appointment, with historic continuity with the apostolic government of the church. They held that episcopal ordination alone guaranteed and authenticated the sacraments of the church. Others considered it merely as a form of church government, historical and expedient for those who desire it. The CSI in union set up a new tradition, re-interpreting the meaning for episcopacy, and followed it regardless of other prevalent practices and views.¹³ It simply took to the pattern of ministry in apostolic times as in the New Testament. Bishops were for the primary duties of teaching, supervision of public worship, pastoral oversight, ordination of ministers, administering the discipline of the church and assisting other bishops in the consecration of persons duly elected and appointed to be bishops. The CSI took these roles for its bishops. As interpreted by Douglas Webster, it was "the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted."¹⁴ A panel of two to four people from a diocese were elected, and then one of them was selected through a synod special committee and appointed as the bishop. Consecration of a new bishop involved the laying on of hands by three existing bishops. The historic episcopate was accepted, but no particular interpretation of it was insisted on. The CSI received numerous ordained ministers from non-episcopal churches into its ministry without any form of re-ordination, as equals within the church's ministry. Thus it held episcopacy with an ecumenical openness. The fourth chapter of the constitution of the CSI, and Moderator Hospet Sumitra's description of "What is a Bishop in the CSI?" in *South India Churchman*, September 1954, explain the role and function of a bishop as a teacher, liturgical figure, evangelistic leader, father-in-God and pastor.

13. For a concise and helpful discussion of this, see Douglas Webster, *What is this Church of South India?* London: The Highway Press, 1954, pp. 11 ff.

14. *Ibid.*

The Ordained Ministry

The CSI adopted the use of a highly-trained ordained minister for pastoral, sacramental and teaching ministry to the local congregation. Such were named presbyters. Training them and paying them a salary was possible thus far with mission grants. But it was costly and beyond the means of local congregations. Their recruitment and training was cared for by ministerial committees of the dioceses and synod, and the synod theological commission determined the type of colleges and theological orientation for their training. The CSI officially utilised the four regional theological seminaries in the four southern language areas of Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada and the United Theological College at Bangalore to train their candidates, but also accepted those trained at Serampore-affiliated colleges such as Serampore College, Bishops College and Leonard Theological College. There were 800 such ordained presbyters for the 8,500 congregations of the CSI in its initial stages. Annually about 40 retired and only about 60 to 70 new ones were available each year. Hence, pastoral care depended heavily on theologically and pastorally untrained mission agents.

Since early times missions had used teacher-catechists to care for village congregations. They received most of their salary from government grants-in-aid, and a small addition from the mission retained their identity as mission workers. Most of the pastoral, spiritual ministry to village congregations was in their hands. Ordained clergy visited only at infrequent intervals for administering the sacraments. Village congregations did not pay the salary of the teacher or the presbyter, but were "unconsciously trained to be recipients" of spiritual and material blessings "without giving anything in return." Now, when presbyterate was established with a demand to be self-supporting, local churches were unprepared for such financial responsibility. They were also unprepared to do evangelistic activities, and expected the mission agents to do the work. Hence the synod, through a sub-committee led by Bishop Newbigin, began to study the situation and proposed a change. The Newbigin report stated that

In the Acts of the Apostles we have the record of the earliest methods of expansion by which the Church conquered the Roman Empire. It is quite clear from this record that this conquest was not the work of agents paid either from Jerusalem or Antioch, or from Government grants. It was the work of volunteers. So far as we know, the elders upon whom Paul laid hands, and in whose charge he left the new congregations which were the fruit of his work, were newly baptised

men who continued to earn their own living and many of whom were probably slaves employed in pagan households.¹⁵

The early church was not dependent on paid workers; each local congregation produced its own leaders who maintained themselves or were supported by the local congregation. The Newbigin report called for the developing of voluntary unpaid and unordained full-time and part-time workers for the church, and justified the call, stating that "If in our day and in our church we begin to take seriously the question of a voluntary ministry, we are not making desperate experiments to meet an emergency, we are returning to the earliest pattern of the church's ministry." The report proposed a new type of presbyterate, wherein under the teaching pastoral oversight of a full-time paid presbyter, there should develop *ordained honorary presbyters*, suitable leaders in congregations picked, trained and used as voluntary lay elders, and then ordained if fulfilling the qualifications laid down by the 1954 synod, such as that

They should have been engaged in voluntary service...conduct of service, pastoral care...men of prayer, of blameless life and evangelistic zeal...40 years of age...assured that God has called them to the ministry of the Church...have the whole-hearted support of their local church...receive special training.¹⁶

The synod approved this in principle, and also planned on the ordaining of qualified men as full-time or part-time honorary presbyters for urban pastoral work.

The uniting churches brought into the CSI their ordained personnel along with a very wide variety of lay workers known as elders, lay deacons, catechists, evangelists, etc. The CSI now attempted to develop an Order of servants – the diaconate – distinct from the episcopate and presbyterate. Some dioceses rejected the whole idea of honorary presbyters and deacons, but others accepted them. Since not many felt called to such a life-long commitment to give their spare time as voluntary pastors, the 1956 synod resolved to request all the dioceses to take immediate practical steps to select suitable Christian leaders in villages and to train them as voluntary church workers to carry on the work done thus far by paid lay workers, with a view to ordaining those among them who qualified as honorary ordained deacons after a period of three years.¹⁷

To facilitate the adoption of the diaconate, the 1956 synod made two proposals. One, a wide study of the reports of the second assembly of

15. See *Minutes of the Synod Executive Committee*, 15 March 1953, pp. 52f.

16. Quoted from "1954 Synod Minutes" in *The First Decade*, p. 172.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 173, quoting pp. 16f of "1954 Synod Minutes."

the World Council of Churches at Evanston, 1954, particularly the sections "Evangelism – the Mission of the Church to Those Outside Her Life" and "The Laity – The Christian in His Vocation."¹⁸ The hope was that such a study in all the dioceses should arouse "at least a few" of the laity to offer themselves as honorary presbyters and deacons in urban areas. Secondly, the synod theological commission to study the diaconate and advice the synod on the theology of a diaconate and the use of it. The commission felt "the time is not ripe for a full theological study of the diaconate; but that the dioceses should be advised to continue to experiment along the lines already indicated." The 1958 synod hence resolved to continue the venture of selecting, training and using honorary deacons with a view to ordination, with hopes that a clear theology of diaconate would emerge through the period of experiment.

In all such views, the CSI through its leaders was setting new patterns for ministry, retaining what was relevant of the imported models and adding what was feasible within the Indian setting economically and practically. The author's own home congregation had such honorary presbyters and deacons ordained in the sixties and seventies, who were employed in the local industry, the Kolar gold mines, but gave substantial time and leadership to the church's work.

The Laity

The Church of South India is a democratic church in which ordinary lay people play a large part in the administration. Laymen and women form a "large majority" in the synod and diocesan councils and committees at every level, except the purely theological ones. Even bishops are elected through popular will in the dioceses and diocesan councils. The CSI recognises that

the laity are the Church and that only if the laity are fully alive to their Christian responsibility and wholeheartedly participate in the work and the mission of the Church, can the Church effectively fulfill its function in the world.¹⁹

This is reflected in the constitution. Following the section on bishops in chapter four and presbyters and deacons in chapter five, it gives the whole of chapter six to the place and function of the laity, asserting that it welcomes and will, as far as possible, provide for the exercise by lay persons, both men and women, of such gifts of prophecy,

18. Cf. Pothirajulu's doctoral thesis wherein he studies the influence of Evanston on the laity and their role in the church.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

evangelization, teaching, healing and administration as God bestows upon them. In particular, the laity are called upon to exercise important functions in the Church as members of its governing bodies, local and central, and of its disciplinary courts. Women shall be eligible for membership of the Synod and, unless any diocesan council provides otherwise, for membership of diocesan councils and any other administrative or governing bodies in a diocese.²⁰

There were at least three distinct ways the laity fitted into the CSI structure; as full-time paid workers, such as the evangelists, catechists, teachers, doctors, nurses, secretaries, treasurers, accountants, clerks, rural workers, hostel wardens etc.; as unpaid, voluntary helpers in administration as members of the synod, diocesan councils, pastorate and various diocesan committees and in evangelistic work; and as laity who in their secular occupations represented the church and the gospel to the wider world as witnesses, thus enabling evangelization. In the mid-fifties there were 4,280 paid unordained lay workers in the CSI, and of unordained unpaid voluntary workers there were 3,118 lay preachers and 8,105 elders and lay-deacons.

Following the Newbigin report of 1953 on the *Ministry of the Church: Ordained and Unordained, Paid and Unpaid* and Bishop Whittaker's contribution on the theme "A New Pattern for the Church" in the 1954 synod, there was a widespread emphasis on lay-leaders' institutes, short training courses for laity in the theological schools, and associations for professional people to explore the Christian implications of their vocations. The synod committee on volunteer workers proposed in 1954 a three level training programme suited for highly qualified government officials, graduate teachers, business executives and the like; secondary school-trained teachers, clerks, lower grade employees in government and private sectors; and elementary school-educated labourers and farmers. Within the next two years the majority of the dioceses had set up special committees to look after the training of voluntary workers, and had allotted necessary funds and made provision of books, lending library facilities and study possibilities. The desire by then was to develop a uniform scheme in all the dioceses and to increase the number of voluntary workers, particularly from the highly-qualified laity. A large cadre of *moopans* (elders) developed as a result in Madras diocese, each month two courses were conducted for village volunteer workers at the Pasumalai Theological Seminary in the Madurai area, a permanent training centre for lay workers developed in Krishna diocese, a scheme

20. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

of licensing of lay preachers was developed to help the training scheme with an official status and Medak diocese inaugurated the programme with its series of refresher courses to its existing lay leaders culminating in their being licensed as lay preachers of the church.

But in the whole process of the emphasis on laity and their role in the church, there was a total preoccupation with the work of the church. Everything the laity did was related to the existing church, and there appeared a total absence of consideration of the role of the laity in the mission of the church to the world where the majority of them were employed in secular occupations. The CSI constitution failed to distinguish between the "work of the Church" and the "mission of the Church."²¹ RD Paul granted this as typical of the pre-Independence Indian church, as well as the pre-Amsterdam (WCC) world church. But after Evanston 1954, where the role of the laity was studied in relation to industrial society, he called for a definite change. While the conventional understanding of ministry as "clergymen serving at the altar" has changed to include the involvement of the unordained within the church, the need was now an emphasis on the ministry of the laity in the secular world, the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of a secular occupation in which a Christian is engaged. In the Indian democracy, where organised evangelistic activity was looked at with suspicion as proselytizing activity by some in the majority community, the use of the everyday life and practice of Christian ethical standards in the secular world by the Christian laity was increasingly the way forward for mission. But of this, as RD Paul rightly wrote, the CSI was yet to begin its thinking in the mid-fifties.

During that first decade, that the Church of South India, "has been raising £8,000 each year for its missionary work" and "struggling to fulfil its evangelistic task beneath the great citadel of Hinduism and in the face of the incoming tide of Communism" was commended by Douglas Webster as proof that the CSI was true to its commitment "ever to be mindful of its missionary calling."²² The traditional understanding of mission as evangelism that prevailed during this period, and the concept of ministry as within the church, were both challenged and altered through the following years through the many developments which we shall consider. But before we move further from the first decade, we must make two observations concerning the relationship of the Church of South India with the ecumenical and evangelical movements in India and elsewhere.

21. See RD Paul's critique and evaluation of this situation in his chapter 10, "The Laity and the Church" in *The First Decade*, pp. 175-189.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 5 and 22.

As a church, the CSI was an active part of the ecumenical movement and was closely linked with thought developments in the National and World Council of Churches. The rapid social change study of the WCC, its Bombay conference and follow-up study, the Christian Institute for the Study of Society, Christian Literature on Social Concern, the merger of these in the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, their many consultations, symposia, seminars and reports, were influential on the clergy and laity within the Church of South India. There was constant interaction between the leaders of the National Council and the Church of South India. As the ecumenical movement took a world-wide journey in the sixties and seventies in its missionary thinking, a parallel journey could be observed in the CSI. Whereas several union negotiations rose and fell around the world, the CSI was a reality in church union, and as such it had great influence within the worldwide ecumenical movement and enjoyed the privilege of multiplied attention and interaction as a leader within the ecumenical movement. The CSI gained much from the ecumenical movement in terms of its understanding of society, social change, economics, political awareness, theological relevance and theological education.

Whereas the CSI was highly missionary in its vision and evangelistic in its mode of operation, several evangelical agencies sprung up within South India, often motivated by parachurch movements from Western countries. They were critical of the CSI. Keen youth of the CSI were drawn into such movements, and they worked with zeal to promote parachurch developments rather than align with the church's own agenda. While ultimate goals were noble, the methods adopted by such groups often minimised the authority and place of the church. Though many CSI bishops, presbyters and laity gave liberally of their resources to help the new movements, they rallied together in separatist camps as evangelicals and stayed on the fringes of the church's inner life. Some were eager to serve the church, but identified their service more as in the name of their international evangelical parachurch mission or ministry than as of the native church. Church members who were influenced by such parachurch groups gave more of their money to the parachurch cause than to the church. This caused concern within the church, which was eager for self-support.

The national and international evangelical networking ran a parallel course to ecumenical developments, so much so that the CSI, which was basically evangelical, found its ecumenical identity interpreted as "worldly" and "liberal" by extremely anti-ecumenical groups from the

conservative evangelical faith missions and the new (mostly North American) churches. They were out to get converts from the CSI into their own denominations which they were establishing in South India. Examples are the Assemblies of God Church, Disciples of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Southern Baptists, Conservative Baptist Mission, various streams of Pentecostals, etc. It was a strange phenomenon that CSI members who migrated into big cities like Bangalore and Madras ended up in the evangelical (American) Methodist churches which were English congregations, though there were plenty of CSI churches of their own language groups within those cities. The undercurrent is named as evangelical identity. In the fifties, the development of a national structure in the Evangelical Fellowship of India drew the sympathy of some of the CSI bishops, clergy and members, but no official relationship. Evangelical parachurch groups did contribute their teaching and training, often assisting the church's own programmes of revival, missions, evangelism and Christian education. For example, through Scripture Union, Vacation Bible School, revival meetings, schools of evangelism, missionary conventions, literature, etc., the CSI did gain a clear challenge toward the evangelization of the nation. A considerable number of CSI members served as missionaries through parachurch groups, supported by CSI members and churches unofficially. Yet the relationship is an unsolved puzzle, a sort of love-hate relationship.

The effects of the two movements, the ecumenical and the evangelical, upon the CSI have been immense. The first effect is that of the call of the International Missionary Council's meeting at Willingen, Germany, in 1952, to reshape missionary activity at every level.²³ IMC at Willingen said that the basic task should be "the building up of the life of the local congregations." Efforts should be concentrated on the local church, even if it meant the "diminishing of more diffused forms of service." The building up of the local church must always be "related to its missionary outreach;" flexibility in the use of the resources should be aimed at to ensure the "ready transfer of both men and material to areas of special opportunity." Decisions in all matters of common concern to older and younger churches should be made in "mutual consultation in a spirit of partnership."²⁴

23. See *The Missionary Obligation of the Church*, Report of the IMC Conference, Willingen, Germany, 5-17 July 1952, London: Edinburgh Publishing House, 1953.

24. See "Introduction" p. xii in *Renewal and Advance: Report of the CSI Commission on Integration and Joint Action*, 1963, Madras: CLS for CSI, 1963.

The Willingen rethinking did not have any effect on the churches in India until after nine years, when in March 1961, the NCCI executive committee passed a resolution urging church leaders in India and mission board secretaries to attempt "to discover what God is calling the church in India to be and to do;" and to work out specifically "an effective partnership between the Church and the Mission Boards, so that the total task of the Church may be accomplished." Heeding the call of the NCCI, the CSI synod executive in September 1961 set up a "Commission on Integration and Joint Action,"

To gather information about the conditions in each diocese - the problems, the opportunities, the degree of integration, the resources available in personnel and funds (both local and foreign); to make an appraisal of the existing work and to get a vision of new horizons, all in the context of the Church's task in India today.²⁵

"Renewal and Advance" was the report of this commission in 1963.

Renewal and Advance: 1963

The report identified, among the "activities of the church," evangelism as "the first, the foremost and the all-embracing task which the Church has to perform."²⁶ Chapter eight, entitled "Rethinking the Mission of the Church," opened with what sounded like a reiteration of the traditional stance.

The Mission of the Church is to bear witness to the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ. It is based on the commission given by our Lord to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is therefore a God-given task. The task is also primarily of the whole Church for the whole world.²⁷

It said that

Evangelism, the proclamation of the Christian Gospel, is the major task of the church. The Church of South India, and every other church, must give this task the highest priority in its life and work.²⁸

There was a reference to the need to study the task of evangelism within its context, since "revolutionary changes" have taken place "in the social, political and economic life of the people." It was recognized that all of these "impose great modifications on the evangelistic work of the Church today." But without addressing those necessary modifications in

25. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

26. See *ibid.*, p. 70.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

28. *Ibid.*

any depth, the report appeared to pass on with an evasive statement, saying "But they are for the most part in the sphere of external method and organisation rather than in the essential principles of the task."²⁹

Reference made to the poor and depressed classes of people merely noted that the preaching of the gospel among them resulted in mass movements, which were continuing even after changes in national political, educational and economic structures. The building of the church among the poor was seen totally from the angle of evangelism of a traditional style. The report went on to comment on the place of the Christian home, Sunday worship and intercessory prayer in evangelism, the use of personal testimony, literature, preaching, songs, drama, institutions of education and healing and training for effective evangelism.

The report recommended the revitalising of the ministry through the renewal of the whole church by means of a revival, and the improving of the pastoral care of the churches by training more voluntary lay workers and honorary pastors. Considering "the mission of the Church" as "evangelism the primary task," it recommended the use of whole congregations in evangelistic work in their areas, and to include the evangelistic activities of the dioceses under the supervision of the Synod board of missions, renaming it as the "Synod Board of Mission and Evangelism." The addition of new programmes were suggested,

- i. Special missions to Muslims
- ii. Missions to certain classes of Hindus, people who seem favourably disposed towards Christianity
- iii. Missions to tribal folk, such as Lambadies and hill tribes
- iv. Special mission to the intelligentsia
- v. Industrial evangelism³⁰

The CSI linked with the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies for mission to Muslims, and with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society at Bangalore for the study of industrial evangelism and special mission to the intelligentsia and responsive groups among Hindus. It also linked with the CISRS, the Student Christian Movement of India and the Urban Industrial Mission in Bangalore and developed its own programmes such as the Industrial Team Service of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore. It was a natural development after the Bombay follow-up study and the CISRS studies. Thus by 1963 the mission concept

29. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

30. See Part Three, "Recommendations," pp. 181 ff, specially pp. 186-8 and 207.

of the CSI leadership became more concerned with the social context in industrial society and its accompaniments in urbanization, slums, housing problems, sanitation, wage issues, employment, communalism, politics, trade union and other issues. Though traditional concepts of evangelism and missions prevailed in theory, there was a definite beginning towards the social mission of the church.

These developments were different from continuing traditional patterns. The mission to tribal peoples took on the traditional approach, and through the diocesan mission societies, the synod mission board and the National Missionary Society, the CSI ventured into tribal areas. Tribals formed one of the specific blocks for missionary concern in the Church of South India. Whereas the emphasis within the church was spread on the inner life of the church and the many concerns as related above, an exclusive priority for tribal mission emerged in certain conservative evangelical circles and infiltrated into the CSI in an unofficial capacity through what became known as the indigenous missions of India from the sixties.

Influences from the National and World Councils

Renewal for Mission: NCCI Consultation, Nasrapur 1966

What went on in the Church of South India was often influenced by developments in the National Christian Council of India. As noted earlier, the CSI was in close relation to and interaction with other churches within the National Council. There was a thinking and moving together, with an ongoing dialogue between the churches, as they were concerned to fulfil their mission in India. But India went through numerous changes. The Christian church had to determine its mission and role within those changing settings. "Indian Christian ethics has accepted the socialistic pattern as legitimately and specifically Christian in the Indian situation." "Indian Christian social thinkers drew their support for socialism from the Christian faith. A close relationship was seen between faith and socialism." The question of whether a socialistic pattern of society was feasible in the existing democratic structure was not asked but rather taken for granted. Christians supported economic growth more than economic justice, since they lacked economic analytical skills. Hence Christian ethics did "not move away very far from the programmes and purposes of the State."³¹ Five-year plans seemed to bring certain betterment; but Nehruvian liberal humanist leadership began to lose its hold; there were border skirmishes with China, and with the Bandung Conference with

31. See Bengt R Hoffman, *Christian Social Thought in India: 1947-1962*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1967, p. 167. Cf. Godwin Shiri, *Christian Social Thought in India: 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982, p. 18.

other Asian countries India began to think more from an Asian angle. Asian revolution and the Asian meaning of modernization exercised the minds of Asian Christian thinkers, such as those who belonged to the East Asia Christian Conference.³² In 1966 MM Thomas summarised the findings of the study on rapid social change in Asia in his Duff Lectures at Edinburgh as the *Christian Response to the Asian Revolution*.³³ He saw "the struggle for human dignity as a preparation for the Gospel" in the Asian setting, and applied this theme to Indian realities, calling for a rethinking of the church's mission. Economic justice was part of the dignity that the poor masses sought after. The gospel, to be credible, must touch on economic inequalities.

Observing that traditional patterns were breaking down within Hinduism,³⁴ Principal Russell Chandran also called for the church in mission to live for Christ's universal concern in her mission to Hindu society through love and service. It should be noted here that the Oxford conference of 1937 had already opened the church to consider her worldwide role rather than being isolationist.³⁵ DA Thangasamy related this to the changing Asian and Hindu setting. With such calls and challenges, the NCCI felt the need to rethink the mission of the church in India at its meeting in March 1966 at Nasrapur. Hence it took the theme "The Mission of the Church in Contemporary India." This conference provided a stage for "a momentary crystallizing of a continuing dialogue" in the Indian church. The report of the conference was edited by David HS Lyon and Albert D Manuel, entitled *Renewal for Mission*,³⁶ from which we gather the following insights of the mid-sixties. Manuel indicated that situational studies undertaken by the NCCI and IMC (later CWME) revealed that the churches needed radical change if they were to fulfil their mission in contemporary India. The church in Punjab operated on an "apne ghar ke log" principle, meaning the church is for the people of one's own family.³⁷ Not "Church for others!" Litigation problems

32. EACC published its *Church and Society*, edited by MM Thomas, which focused on social issues in Asia and the church's mission in Asia. EACC also later studied the *Asian Meaning of Modernization* (an EACC publication edited by SK Chatterji.)

33. London: SCM Press, 1966.

34. Chandran quotes KM Panikkar, *Hinduism at Cross Roads*, to say that the traditions within Hinduism are changing.

35. The Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, 1937, brought a breakthrough in ecumenical social ethics. See JH Oldham (ed.), *The Oxford Conference: Official Report*, Chicago: Willet, Clark and Co., 1937.

36. Madras: CLS, 1967, pp. 237.

37. Ernest Campbell, missionary to Punjab, is quoted here by Albert Manuel in *Renewal For Mission*, p. 1.

surmounted on church property ownership questions in independent India after the departure of missionaries. Barbara Boal noted that the people of Kond Hills who spent forty to sixty rupees annually for sacrifices would not give, after conversion, more than Rupees 2.50 annually to the church! "Inadequate giving is positive evidence that...the spiritual life is at a low ebb,"³⁸ and hence there was urgent need for renewal in the Indian church. Renewal or revival? Opinions differed as to which term was more suitable to express the need that definitely was there in the church in India in the mid-sixties. Albert Manuel, earlier lecturer at Tamilnad Theological College, Tirumaraiyur, and later the first Indian general secretary of the Christian Literature Society, favoured the term renewal, and it meant to him the process in which the worship in the sanctuary overflows into worship in work and life; a birth of a new commitment to the mission of the church. As a result of such renewal,

then will we be set free from preoccupation with ourselves and led out of our religious isolation to establish living relationships with the life of the world and the working of God in it.³⁹

DA Thangasamy saw revival as popular with people who tend to forget that God is also concerned for human affairs and communities outside the church. But, he saw renewal as not merely a restoration of a life that has been waning, but as evolution and adaptation of life to meet new conditions of the environment and to make full creative use of new opportunities that have been gained. Revival suggests the vicissitudes of closed communities that live in isolation from the rest of the world, nourishing a physical and cultural life of their own. Renewal is the dangerous, but dynamic adventure of breaking communities open to expose them to cultural and spiritual forces that will radically change them for better or for worse.⁴⁰ Renewal, Thangasamy proposed, "will make the Church in India not only to stand up to the intellectual and spiritual challenges of the rapidly changing Indian environment, but to redemptively influence the process and direction of that rapid change." Hence he demanded a renewal of the church's structures, and believed

38. This was stated often by Bishop VS Azariah. Barbara Boal was a missionary anthropologist who was involved in study among the tribes of the Kond Hills. See her account of "The Church in the Kond Hills" in Victor EW Hayward (ed.), *The Church as Christian Community: Three Studies of North Indian Churches*, World Studies of Churches in Mission, London: Lutterworth Press, 1966, pp. 221-343.

39. See Albert Manuel's "Introduction" in *Renewal For Mission*, p. 3.

40. See DA Thangasamy, "Renewal of the Church for its Mission" in *Renewal for Mission*, pp. 7ff.

that structures in the church have no sanctity of origin, but only functional value; the church should not be merely a "gate of heaven," but a gateway of the Christian to the world; not to wipe clean soiled hands, but to strengthen clean hands to go cleansing; congregations should experiment house groups, factory groups and office groups; ministry should be unpaid, tent-making ministry, with new modes such as industrial missions.

David HS Lyon, a Church of Scotland missionary who served as literature secretary of the NCCI, agreed with Thangasamy and found a basis for his agreement in the many expressions on the church, its mission and involvements from ecumenical statements between 1938 and 1963.⁴¹ He noted how the structures of the church matter much to the renewal of the church; and "if the renewal of the Church is to happen considerable changes will have to take place involving every part of our corporate life, and affecting appreciably our personal ways of life."⁴² Structural change

41. The February 1963 issue of the *Letter on Evangelism* published by the DWME quoted the following statements from ecumenical conferences since 1938 on the church; On the state of the church in relation to its mission, "The Church...is often a hindrance to the coming of the kingdom, i.e., the rule of God over all" (Tambaram 1938); on the fellowship of the church and its mission, "The world today is hungry for community. But to many it seems that the fellowship of the churches is much less satisfying than that which they find in their own secular or religious organizations or brotherhood" (Amsterdam 1948); on the introversion of the church and its effect on mission, "The average congregation is apt to be an introverted community which does not think primarily of its obligation to bring the knowledge of Christ to its whole neighbourhood and to the whole world, and this introversion is apt to mark the life, thought and leadership of the whole Church" (WCC Central Committee 1951); on the proper involvement of the church in the life of the world, "The real battles of faith today are being fought today in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes...[and] in the relationship of nations. Very often it is said that the Church should 'go into these spheres,' but the fact is that the Church is already in these spheres in the persons of its laity....Churches...fail to grasp the importance of Christian witness in and through secular organs of society....The Christian who...throws himself into the social and political struggle should be actively encouraged and considered a gain, not a loss, to the Church" (Evanston 1954); on the shaping of the church for its mission, "We must be specially careful to note those elements in the Gospel which challenge the bases of the society in which we live and the social configuration of the churches within it, so that under the merciful judgement of God the Church as the witnessing community, may be continually reshaped to the pattern of the Gospel that is preached" (New Delhi 1961).

42. See David Lyon, "A Structure for a Missionary Congregation," in *Renewal for Mission*, pp. 58f..

in the church was seen in terms of "unity" and "indigenisation" by William Stewart of Serampore and DG Moses of Hislop College, respectively.⁴³

MM Thomas indicated that the struggle for human dignity among the masses of India should be used as a preparation for the gospel. The Christian community and human community should work together for their dignity. For such a work together, Thomas thought there should not be an overemphasis on the demarcation lines between the Christian and the non-Christian communities. Farquhar had seen Hinduism as preparation for the gospel in his *Crown of Hinduism*, and Kraemer expounded a radical discontinuity between Hinduism and Christian faith. Different from both, AG Hogg had insisted on the "challenging relevance" of the gospel to Hindu society. Devanandan and Thomas followed in Hogg's approach, and worked towards a "common humanity" that both the Christian and the Hindu share "in Christ." Their concern was not for a point of contact between Christianity as a religion and other religions, but the sharing of common humanity in the common struggles of life.

Participation in the struggle for personal existence is involved in participation in Christ's mission. For in the end it is a question of what God men worship....The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the ground from which all struggles of personal existence derive their meaning, purpose and incentive....If the people of India, in general are within the same struggle for human existence, and therefore in one sense for Christ Himself, then we have to be inside this struggle to articulate the meaning of the struggle, namely, that it is in Christ. This is what makes the partnership in the struggle with non-Christians the essential context of Christian mission.⁴⁴

The gospel, the good news and evangel, becomes understandable when mission is carried out in such partnership. Thomas cited the experiences of church life in Delhi and Bangalore from the works of Herbert Jai Singh, James Alter and Harry Daniel to say that "Evangelism has meaning at depth only as a word coming out of a church engaged with all people in their struggle for personal dignity and social justice.

43. See *Renewal for Mission* pp. 47-57 and 75-85 for their articles. W Stewart was a Church of Scotland missionary who served as Principal of Serampore College; DG Moses was principal of Hislop College at Nagapur.

44. MM Thomas quoted his thoughts here from Orchard's *Mission in a Time of Testing*, EACC statements and Hogg's views. See his "The Struggle for Human Dignity as a Preparation for the Gospel," presentation at Nasrapur, *Renewal for Mission*, pp. 103f.

and relevant to the spiritual awakening it represents."⁴⁵

Such participation with non-Christians necessarily meant a lessening of emphasis on the church as an institution, a lessening of the "personal evangelism and mass revivalism" and organised charity to obtain converts, but the developing of an inclusive partnership of dialogue and cooperation. TK Thomas hence argued in favour of dialogue⁴⁶ as a renewed form for mission. The church as an institution was seen as a problem by many at this time, who felt that the post-Constantine development of the institutionalisation of church life must be altered or renewed. Visser't Hooft of the WCC expressed it saying, "some time the challenge comes to each church, whether it is willing to sacrifice its institutional life in order to gain the apostolic life."⁴⁷ In India at this time there was the example of Kaj Baago, who so undermined the institution of the church, that he argued there was no need for a Hindu to convert, be baptized or join the church. His views were later summarised by DAT Thomas of Poona United Theological College in his article "Mission, Baptism and the Church."⁴⁸ JR Chandran implied in his lectures that "The Hindus already belong to Christ; but do not belong to the Church;" and that the Christian mission must make it possible for Hindus to realise this.⁴⁹

These ideas raised questions on the place of conversion, baptism and church membership. To the Church of South India, which had consciously committed itself to mission in terms of evangelism and talked with concern of the number of people who were outside the church, the above trend sounded alarms. Bishop Newbigin again was to be the spokesman in clarifying issues. At Nasrapur he spoke on "Conversion."⁵⁰ He observed that the nineteenth century emphasised "personal commitment" and condemned other faiths, and the twentieth century faced the danger of

45. *Ibid.*, p. 104. Thomas refers to *The Church in Delhi*, an NCCI study for World Studies of Churches in Mission, by James P. Alter and Herbert Jai Singh, in Victor EW Hayward (ed.), *The Church as Christian Community*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-136; and HFJ Daniel, et al., *Reconstruction and Revolution*, Bangalore: The Federal Councils of SCM India, Pakistan and Ceylon, 1957.

46. TK Thomas was literature secretary for the YMCA in India. See his "A Christian Approach to Men of Other Faiths," in *Renewal For Mission*, pp. 107-114.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 107. TK Thomas quoted from Hoof's *The Renewal of the Church*, p. 11.

48. See RS, XV:4, December 1968, pp. 61-74.

49. See JR Chandran, "The Christian Style of Living," *Renewal for Mission*, pp. 94f where he argues for this view.

50. See *ibid.*, pp. 33-46.

losing personal commitment and stressing universalism; but as Paul Loeffler commented on conversion, we must "together understand" the two sides of salvation, that it is particular to few and universal to all at the same time. Newbigin quoted Roland Allen's works and a wide wealth of information from the paper on "Conversion and Social Change" from the WCC central committee, to insist that the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper should go together in the church. To him, the Book of Acts taught a radical conversion, commitment and the importance of becoming part of a visible fellowship as a response to the call to repent and believe. He answered the confusing question "should we try to make Hindus Christian?" by saying that he would say to village Hindus,

Be baptised into Christ; Come to the Holy Supper; Study the Scriptures with us; and teach us all that the Holy Spirit has taught you so that we may become different because of what He has done with you.⁵¹

Conversion is not just a matter of the individual's salvation, but his becoming a sign, earnest and instrument of God's total plan of salvation for the world. Thus the mid-sixties saw the church in India grappling with her mission, its relation to other faiths, the place of conversion, socio-economic realities and the struggle for human dignity and common humanity, and the meaning of evangelism and the relevance of the structures of the church. The Nasrapur report became a manifesto of renewal for the church in India in a real sense. There were widespread studies on the above issues. The southern regional conference of the Indian Christian Theological Association met at Tambaram during December 1966 and considered the topic of baptism and conversion. Papers presented, such as JM Pathrapankal, "Faith and Conversion: A Study of the Context of the Covenantal Significance of Baptism," James A Bergquist, "Baptism in the Context of the Christian Mission," Abhishiktananda, "Baptism, Faith and Conversion," and DA Thangasamy, "The Process of Conversion" were published in the *Indian Journal of Theology*.⁵²

In preparation for the WCC fourth assembly at Uppsala in 1968, there were studies on the topic "Renewal in Mission." At Bangalore the CISRS called for a consultation on evangelism in September 1968. Through the studies led by Eugene Heideman on "Ecumenical Reports and Working

51. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

52. See *IJT*, 16:3, July to September, 1967, pp. 166 ff, 180ff, 189ff and 204ff respectively. Cf. JR Chandran, "Baptism: A Scandal or a Challenge?," *RS* XIX: 1, 1972, pp. 51-58.

Evangelists," TV Philip on "Issues in Evangelism Among the Educated Secularised Indians," DA Thangasamy on "The Rationale and the Meaning of Christian Mission," Francis J Vadketh on "The Good News and its Communication" and DAT Thomas on "Mission, Baptism and the Church," the group probed into issues on "Evangelism among the Educated Indians." A report and the papers were widely made available through *Religion and Society*.⁵³

All these had profound influences upon developments in the church in India at this period. There were two gaps noticed, the place of the mission of the church in industrial areas, and theological education as a means to the renewal of the church for mission. The gap was identified in the sixties, and the seventies saw many corrective developments as a result. Already in 1968 the United Theological College held a consultation on the training of the laity, and published its report for wider use.⁵⁴ DA Thangasamy wrote his book *Towards Involvement* as a book of the theory and practice of lay education, and made a significant contribution to the cause of laity in the mission of the church.⁵⁵ The Board of Theological Education held a major All-India Consultation on Theological Education at Bangalore.⁵⁶ UTC published a statement on its own openness to people of all religious backgrounds to enter its programme of study of theology and religions, with special emphasis on biblical content. Thus, theological education sought a wider impact for educating mankind rather than only professional priests. In 1969 a new experiment opened in regional vernacular and contextual theological education at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, the effect of which on the Tamil dioceses of the CSI was of a new order, as socio-politically conscious, culturally relevant ministry began to develop. Here the worldwide journey in contextual theological education through the efforts of Theological Education Fund of WCC bore fruit in India. Theological graduates entering the church's ministry in the seventies were of a different calibre with more relevant understanding of the mission of the church in India.

Social Involvement as Mission of the Church of South India

The church's service to urban society gained importance through the Industrial Team Service at St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore, the

53. See RS, XV:4, December 1968, pp. 24-86.

54. See UTC Report on *Laity and Theological Education*, Bangalore: UTC, 1968.

55. DA Thangasamy, *Towards Involvement: The Theory and Practice of Lay Education*, Madras: CLS, Delhi: ISCPCK, Lucknow: LPH, 1972.

56. See the report of the National Consultation on *Theological Education in India*, Bangalore, Board of Theological Education, NCCI, 1968.

Community Service Centre, Madras and the Urban Industrial and Rural Mission of the NCCI. Paul Siromani, Harry Daniel, Alexander Devasundaram and others gave leadership in this regard.⁵⁷ During the later part of the sixties, backward and poorer sections of society drew the attention of the CSI. In view of the grave disabilities which Christians of backward communities suffer in many parts of South India as compared with non-Christians of the same community, the synod resolved

to bring urgently to the notice of the State Governments...that aid to the needy, in whatever form, should be given on the basis of need and not on the basis of creed or caste.⁵⁸

To illustrate this, let us take a case from the CSI Karnataka Central Diocese. Kolar Gold Fields CSI congregations were aroused by the plight of the poor mining workers' children and their educational needs. The government gave scholarships to poor children of the Adi-Dravida Scheduled Caste families. But those who became Christians from this community were no longer eligible to receive government aid, though becoming Christian did not alter their financial status by any noticeable standard. The CSI aligned with other churches of the area, such as the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, and arranged public meetings and conferences to discuss the issue as unjust, unconstitutional and discriminatory. Letters were sent to all the government authorities.⁵⁹ This whole episode built solidarity among the poor, cutting across denominational barriers. Similar developments were seen in other parts of the CSI. Such social protest and demands for justice arose as a result of conscientising activities undertaken by a few Christians within the CSI.

The church was also concerned about various influences on its young people. The 1970 synod executive minutes reveal concern caused by the spread of the Naxalite movement, which attracted many Christian youth. Hence it resolved to intensify diocesan programmes of constructive social action led by the young people, and to clearly express that the Christian church "is on the side of those who are oppressed and exploited and stands with them in their cry for justice."⁶⁰ It also sought the help of the CISRS to produce small booklets for the guidance of young people on social and political issues. Thus the church was coming of age to find

57. Paul Siromani requested more funds from the CSI synod.

58. See *CSI Synod Executive Committee Minutes of 1970*, EC 70-68, p. 82.

59. The author was such a student who did not receive government scholarships because of his family converting to Christian faith. As a secondary school student then in the mid-sixties, he participated in these public meetings and protests.

60. See *CSI Synod Executive Committee Minutes of 1970*, EC 70-67, pp. 81f.

its membership getting involved in current movements of society. A major aid to the CSI in its social understanding was the synod consultation at ECC in 1974.

"Church and Social Justice" Consultation at ECC

The Synod of the Church of South India, in cooperation with the Industrial Service Team of St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore, CISRS and Ecumenical Christian Centre, met in a consultation on "Church and Social Justice" in September of 1974, at ECC, Whitefield. The 68 participants included twelve of the seventeen CSI bishops, representatives of other church groups and speakers.⁶¹ The underlying assumptions are revealed in the goal of the seminar affirmed by the participants. Their "chief concern was the mission of the Church in India." In scrutinising the realities of India, the "dominant element" they found was "the deep longing and the growing struggle of the Indian people for a just society." Since they noted that this struggle was relevant to what the gospel of Jesus Christ had to say about God's purposes for man and society; they held that "the Church cannot faithfully discharge its mission without relating itself meaningfully to this struggle." Since any interpretation of this struggle involved both a social analysis of the society as well as a grasp of the social function of the church in society, only the type of theological reflection that is based on and guided by such social understanding could lead the church to faithfully discharge her mission in Jesus' pattern of "partisanship with the poor and oppressed."⁶² The seminar went on to identify the social mission of the church in India as to stand with and for the poor as a spokesman of the oppressed, striving to establish a just society, wherein the kingdom of God will be found, God's will done and daily bread supplied to all. It was recognised that this would mean a retraining of the type of spirituality from its individualism to a spirituality that transforms the individual and leads to engagement for the transformation of society. It affirmed the 1974 CSI fourteenth synod recommendation,

The highest priority should be given to educate the masses with a view to making them conscious of the exploitation they are subjected to, their rights and their capability for action for changing this situation. A beginning for such education should be made at the level of the local congregation, especially in the rural areas, following the regular Sunday worship service.⁶³

61. For a list of participants and speakers, papers and findings, see *Church and Social Justice, op. cit.*, specially pp. 42-44.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 34 and 41f.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

It also recognised that "it is high time that the Church rethought and re-oriented its educational enterprise in such a way that it ceases to support the status quo and becomes a committed vehicle for social change."⁶⁴

In this the seminar criticised the synod recommendation on modifying traditional educational and medical services as not going far enough, and called for a drastic simplifying of the institutions and structures of the church, to develop austerity and to view life from the perspective of the 85% oppressed poor masses of India. The 1966 Nasrapur call was repeated here on the renewal of structures. It concluded saying that

the great human issues of our time are in the political and socio-economic spheres. More than ever before, today the Church has been awakened to the demonic reality of corporate sin which operates, and perpetuates itself, through institutions and structures of society - even when some of these seem quite harmless and respectable, or began in good intentions and has good people in them. We have realised that the massive dehumanisation that these structures bring into human life surpasses the evil done by individual wickedness, and defeats private good intentions. If the Gospel message is that God in Christ is active to restore to man's personal and social life the qualities of humanity, the measure of which is the humanity of Jesus, then the Church cannot opt out of its responsibility to co-operate with Christ in the transformation of the manifestly unjust and inhuman society of our day. To continue merely helping the victims of the present systems, however necessary this might be, without consciously working, at the same time, for the transformation of the whole system is criminal irresponsibility in the face of the radical demands of the fullness of the love of Christ. To be on the side of the oppressed, to be involved in their struggle for justice, to look at life and to orient it from the point of view of the poor in the light of the Gospel ethic, is the primary calling of the Church in the present context. For the Church is called to be a sign of the Kingdom of God where the chief values are justice, peace, love and brotherhood.⁶⁵

Evangelism certainly is neither forgotten nor neglected, but given a relevant meaning and contextual interpretation with its priority within the Indian setting. The CSI identified its mission much closer to the felt needs of the 85% majority. In this process, it truly took an ecumenical journey, hearing Roman Catholic, Mar Thoma and Hindu social analysts, and allowing actual data from the Indian reality to determine their thoughts of

64. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

mission. What the CSI was going through in her theology of mission was not a lonely journey, as Catholic and Mar Thoma theologians also were thinking on similar lines.⁶⁶

The need for this kind of theological reflection became dominant in other Indian Christian theological circles as well. Particularly this was so in the theological educational institutions and among theological educators, so that a real desire to think missions in context emerged in the seventies. We should here take note of the emphasis in the third mandate period of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches, which was contextualization of theology and theological education. Some of the developments and events of this period in India prove the point. For example, developments at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai,⁶⁷ the National Study Consultation at Yavatmal in 1974, when the Board of Theological Education of the National Christian Council of India brought together a group of theological educators to address the question of the theological training of the whole church and new patterns of training;⁶⁸ and the two-week workshop on Doing Theology in the Indian Context arranged by the United Theological College in collaboration with Dharmaram College in 1977, for theological educators of both Protestant and Roman Catholic seminaries in India.⁶⁹ Through all these, Indian theological education was entering into the arena of contextual theologising during this period. Men like Samuel Amirtham of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and Russell Chandran of United Theological College were influential in bringing insights from these wider circles to Indian theological thinking, particularly from the Theological Education Fund of the WCC⁷⁰ and the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.⁷¹

66. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-37. Roman Catholic scholars Francois Houtart, Amalorpavadas, and H Volken and Mar Thoma leaders MM Thomas and MA Thomas, along with CSI leaders were the resource people at this consultation.

67. We consider the developments in the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in the next chapter.

68. See the *Report of the National Study Consultation on Theological Education for the Training of the Whole Church and New Patterns of Training*, Yeotmal, 1974, BTE-NCCI, 1975.

69. See the unpublished papers of the workshop on "Doing Theology in Context," co-sponsored by UTC and Dharmaram College, summer of 1977. The resource persons included Dr. Gordon Koffman, Prof MN Srinivas, JR Chandran, Fr. M Mundadan and a host of others.

70. See Samuel Amirtham, "Some Trends in the Development of Theological Education in India," *IJT*, 25:3-4, July-December 1976, pp. 197-209.

71. See JR Chandran, "Emerging Issues in the Discussion of Third World Theologians," *RS*, XXV:3, September 1978, pp. 64-72.

The mission of the church in India in the later part of the seventies was seen as intricately bound to the social context. Evangelism and proclaiming of the good news was related to the particular setting of a particular social unit. The context determined the way forward for evangelism. In Mrs. Gopal Ratnam's report on the 1974 synod decisions with regard to the "Church in the Struggle for a Just Society" to the Consultation on Church and Social Justice, there is a glaring absence of the term "evangelism."⁷² Though this does not mean evangelism was omitted from the concern of the synod, it does indicate the priority in mission. It was neither proclamation evangelism as the sole method of mission, nor service; but it was actual involvement in Social Justice and Social Action that was understood as the mission of the church. Hence it appears that between the years 1963 to 1975, there was a transition in the way the Church of South India understood her mission in India.

The effect of these changes should be tested at the grassroots level. Once again our illustration comes from the author's home town. One of the participants at the "Church and Social Justice" seminar, P.J. Lawrence, later became area chairman of the Kolar Gold Fields area of the Karnataka Central Diocese of the CSI. When his area hosted the diocesan council meetings of 20-23 October 1977, in his welcome address he painted the context of Kolar Gold Fields, a gold mine town established in the 1860s by the British John Taylor Company. Now there were nearly 400,000 people, about 25,000 employed and all the rest dependent, or 15 dependents on each wage earner. 5 percent were rich, 10 percent middle class and the remaining 85 percent poor. People were "politically conscious, culturally rich, spiritually awakened," but socio-economically poor and down-trodden. The reason, Lawrence went on to say, was unemployment and poverty.

The Bharat Gold Mines Limited which had once employed 35,000 workers has only 11,000 employees today. There is little or no scope of employment potential. It is an accepted fact that the salaries and the living conditions of the workers is far below desirable standards. Bharat Earth Movers on the other hand has 6,000 employees who are well paid and well cared for. Though it was meant originally to help local people, since they need only skilled workers, most of their workers are from outside KGF. With the advent of BEML, the market prices have also rapidly gone up. Therefore, instead of relief it has only brought added misery to the local people. Apart from

72. See Mrs Gopal Ratnam, "Church in the Struggle for a Just Society," in *Church and Social Justice*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4.

these two major industries, there is no other employment opportunity for the people in KGF. It is estimated that there are more than 35,000 educated unemployed and several thousands of uneducated and unskilled unemployed. It is shocking to note that due to unemployment and poverty, many have sought immoral ways of seeking a livelihood. We could see the naked facts of the deteriorating humanity at its lowest ebb.⁷³

The theme of the gathering was "spiritual renewal" That it was already at work in the churches was acknowledged by this clergyman who went beyond to the concrete struggles of the people, the roots of their immorality and sin, and implied that if the church council is to plan anything at all, it was to be in the light of that concrete reality. Here we notice the trickling down to the grassroots of the high theology of a consultation at the Ecumenical Christian Centre. One should also note that the theological education at United Theological College where this clergyman received his ministerial training had given him a mental framework to think on these felt needs of his flock. P.J. Lawrence was active in the church's committees on politics and society and in the Urban Industrial Mission, and edited its *Mission Challenge* from Bangalore. He represented a trend in the CSI which emphasised mission in context.⁷⁴

In the year 1977, the whole of the CSI was celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, and a historical analytical study of the thirty years of CSI was produced as *CSI After Thirty Years: A Report of the Life and Work of the Church*.⁷⁵ The report indicated how early concerns of integration and unity were replaced by concern for authentic mission in the CSI. This was pungently expressed in the sixteenth synod report of 1978, wherein the CSI found fault with the mission thinking of the Council for World Mission,⁷⁶ saying that the new structure of the CWM did not reflect sufficient rethinking of mission relevant to the present times. Rather, CWM operated with the traditional structure with slight modifications.

73. See *Looking Back and Looking Forward*, Report of the Fourth Biennial Council of the Karnataka Central Diocese of CSI, 20-23 October 1977, KGF, KGF: Y. Meshack of Christian Literature Printers, 1977.

74. P.J. Lawrence is convenor of the synod Commission on Political Questions and is a presbyter who is actively involved in the church's concern for the creating of a just society. He edits the *Mission Challenge*, the official organ of the UIRM of the NCCI, from Bangalore.

75. See *CSI After Thirty Years*, Madras: CSI Synod, 1977.

76. The Council for World Mission is the body which took over the missionary activities of the Congregational churches and replaced the old London Missionary Society.

The CSI proposed that "What is needed today is the mutuality in witnessing to the reality of Christ and His saving power in the personal, social, national and international life."⁷⁷ The social and political arena came into focus in such a view.

The place of dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies also was focused on in this synod. Recognising that Christians in India lived in a religiously plural setting, the need to prepare the whole congregation to be able to listen and understand the symbols of other faiths, and to incorporate insights from Hindu and Muslim sectors as much as the early Christians incorporated insights from Hebraic, Greek and Roman traditions, and the need to train theological students in the art of dialogue, were emphasized. Use of CISRS and the setting up of a commission on dialogue were proposed.⁷⁸

This synod also recognised the fast development of the need for social ministry, and considered the need for the whole structure of the ministry to be restudied and defined. They saw ministry as teaching ministry, sacramental ministry and developmental ministry. bishops, presbyters and deacons were to form the three-fold ministry of the church. Honorary presbyters and lay pastors were to assist the ongoing ministry. The Synod also proposed a pastoral aid department to organise and assist in the continuing education of ministers, in their welfare and in finding needed aids for them in terms of books, audio-visual aids, information etc.,⁷⁹ In the eighties, the need was for the synod to identify priorities in the mission of the church; to this it turned its attention.

Priorities for the Mission of the Church

The next important milestone was "A Consultation on Priorities for the Mission of the Church," organised by the CSI synod from 24 September to 2 October 1981. It was the culmination of a series of consultations, introductory papers, and preliminary meetings in early 1981, and a synod-level preparatory seminar in March 1981. Each diocese discussed its own priorities in mission and brought papers to the September meeting at the Inter-Church Service Agency (ICSA) of Madras.

Among the many concerns, the CSI here again expressed its first priority

77. See *CSI Synod Draft Reports*, Kottayam, 1978, p. 9.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 17f. A pastoral aid department was established under the leadership of Bishop Victor Premasagar as chairman and Rev. BS Devamani. It concentrated on presbyters' continuing education, inter-diocesan pastors' conferences, mobile circulating library, Bible study, spiritual life and social action programmes, personal and family welfare scheme for pastors and other church workers, etc.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff.

as evangelism.⁸⁰ Quoting the pledge "to be mindful of its missionary calling and...Evangelism" from the constitution, the then-moderator the Most Rev. Solomon Doraiswamy affirmed "the one priority of the C.S.I. is the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of Christ('s) Church."⁸¹ It was the task of the bishop of Tirunelveli to reiterate the affirmation with further facts from historical developments of evangelism in South India from before the union to the beginning of the eighties,⁸² from the historic National Missionary Society and Indian Missionary Society to contemporary indigenous missionary societies such as the Friends Missionary Prayer Band, the Indian Evangelical Mission, the Church Growth Missionary Movement, the Church Growth Mission etc., supported by CSI members and churches. He traced developments of missionary activities as sending missionaries to tribal people in local Bhainsa and farther fields in Papua and Thailand. Though he viewed mission as more than announcing the good news, involving "preaching as well as doing," his preoccupation for the missionary work of CSI was with the preaching of the gospel to the 427 tribes in Central and Northern India.

Interestingly, though Bishop Daniel Abraham made reference to the large Friends Missionary Prayer Band as "mostly supported by the members of the CSI churches," he did not include it within CSI concerns for missions. In his priorities were plans for the CSI to establish a missionary institute, a junior missionary association, a synod fund for evangelism, a week of witness and missionary Sunday to raise funds and awareness. All this he viewed as to be done within the church, and he pointed to the need "To encourage the congregations to give liberally to church sponsored missionary societies." With regard to non-church societies, he saw a need "to coordinate the work of various missionary bodies in the Church of South India area." He did not seem to take notice of the India Missions Association, a body formed in 1977 by the effort of the Evangelical Fellowship of India to help the many evangelical mission groups develop cooperation and coordination of their activities. To serve the cause of "mission as evangelism" from within the church seemed to be the bishop's emphasis.

80. See Victor Premsagar, "A Report of the Consultation of Priorities for the Mission of the Church, September 24 - October 1, 1981" in Dass Babu (ed.), *Priorities for the Mission of the Church*, Madras: Diocesan Press for CSI Synod, 1982, p. 3.

81. See the then Moderator Solomon Doraiswamy's introductory paper, *ibid.*, p. 10.

82. See Bishop Daniel Abraham, "Evangelism and Outreach in the Church of South India," *ibid.*, pp. 15-22.

The concern for evangelism occupied prime place in most diocesan priorities. There was no shying away from evangelism, but definite plans for it. But one should note here that evangelism was defined variously by various diocesan representatives. Some defined involvement in evangelism as of the local church in its neighbourhood, others in terms of sending evangelists to interior unreached areas within their diocesan area, and yet others sending missionaries to far away places. The following statements illustrate the variety in the emphasis on evangelism in the eighties:

Local congregation is the Church of God in that place; Evangelism has to be Church centred and Church sponsored; One has to be involved in Social Justice and developmental programmes also; Ministry of Evangelism should be totally self-supporting; the major thrust of the Diocese, especially during the past three years was the unprecedented enthusiasm and commitment to Evangelism resulting in more than 5000 new converts.⁸³

Dr. Chandran Devanesan of Madras Christian College pointed to a larger dimension of mission through "The Educational Ministry of the Church." "Though the educational institutions were conceived as basically evangelistic institutions, they stood for more than just evangelism conceived in narrow terms."⁸⁴ They "became nurseries for the training of national leadership" and contributed to economic change and the transformation of the lives of many backward classes in India. Devanesan noted that unlike the pioneer period when there were a hundred and eighty Protestant and Catholic colleges and only a few other government colleges, now "there are 2 million and 64 thousand students in higher education in over 108 universities and 4,000 colleges with a faculty of 200,000 teachers." This massive enterprise represented "the third largest educational system after the U.S. and USSR." Christian colleges could not be in the lead to supply national leaders, but they could supply regional and communal leaders.

Here Devanesan pointed to the need for a policy of "consolidation and qualitative improvement" of the educational contribution of Christian educational missions, rather than repeating the old nineteenth-century London model. He called for a priority in the educational mission of the CSI in saying that

We need a lot of fresh, creative thinking and the courage to innovate and experiment with new ideas and models. We were once pioneers

83. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 126, 73, 222.

84. See Dr. Chandran Devanesan, "The Educational Ministry of the Church," *ibid.*, p. 23.

in the field of education and our contribution to national development in the past in unquestioned. But what of today and tomorrow? Are we content to stay in our ruts or are we prepared to break out of them to work for a system that is concerned with the vast numbers of people who are still denied the right to education? Can we be pioneers again?⁸⁵

Similarly, the role of medical missions and the rural-urban development concerns were studied through the presentations of Dr. K Jeremiah and James E Balraj.⁸⁶ Just as in educational ventures, the government has also multiplied medical colleges, hospitals and facilities enormously, but more geared to meet the needs of the elite. The stress in Balraj's analysis was that since Second World War in the emerging independent nations there has been much more demand for socio-economic emancipation of the deprived. Existing developmental and welfare programmes were infested with weaknesses. There was not much long-term planning, coordination, scrutiny or control. But there was considerable wastage and abuse, recurring and increasing costs, isolation from the community, too much formality, a tendency to serve the rich, and on the whole they failed to bring about any social change. Whereas there were over 500 major research centres and an equal number of minor ones in India, their findings and innovations did not percolate to the vast number of people living in abject misery and bondage in the six lakhs villages and the thousands of slums. Balraj painted a word picture:

Still the ploughman plods his weary way homeward after a back-breaking day following his wooden plough; still the potter sits at his handwheel; the cobbler still stitches with his hand the poorly tanned leather; the blacksmith still sweats at his anvil banging with all the might that he can muster from his poorly fed undernourished body, and we are supposed to be spending Rs. 400 crores on scientific and technological research in this country.⁸⁷

Hence, he said, the involvement of Christian mission should not be merely to be followers and duplicators of governmental programmes, but, as Devanesan proposed in the educational task, to be innovators in the process of development. Development itself is seen here as the process of change from the rigidly traditional to the flexible, which

⁸⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁸⁶. See K Jeremiah, "Medical Services and Community Health," *ibid.*, pp 37-42; James E Balraj, "Development: Rural Urban and the Training of the Diaconate," *ibid.*, pp. 43-53.

⁸⁷. Balraj, *ibid.*, p. 47.

responds to the needs of present-day India. Such a change in attitudes and techniques would, as already earlier findings of the church said, involve structural changes. The ministerial structure itself had first to change. With better trust in the people themselves and their ability to participate in solving their own problems, ministry will become shared. Here was a reinforcement of the concepts that the CSI already had been formulating in terms of unpaid voluntary workers, honorary presbyters and deacons and training of the laity for mission in the context of their own employment in the secular world.

Democratic India was already striving to develop her resources and was fast growing into a technological, industrial and literate society. Yet the fact remained that the majority of the population lived in rural settings with their particular problems. Bishop Sundar Clarke of Madras criticised the tendency to follow Western clichés like industrial evangelism, industrial mission, city mission, etc., and called attention to the need for 80% of the efforts of the church in India to be diverted to the rural poor, the illiterate villager, the landless labourer and the oppressed farm worker.⁸⁸ Whereas there were some references in the diocesan priorities to meet the needs particularly in urban settings, much of the concern seemed to be rural. As indicated by Bishop Clarke, elementary education of the rural children "is one of the most important and effective agencies of Christian witness," and the CSI should continue to serve through this elementary level of education in mission. Bishops MC Mani and Sam Ponniah both showed similar keenness in their dioceses for church involvement in elementary education.⁸⁹ Bishop KC Seth referred to evangelism among immigrant estate labourers and the supply of vehicles to evangelists through Synod funds.⁹⁰ Kanyakumari diocese saw the need to incorporate a dialogue approach in evangelism at the cape where the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was active with the large tourist population that traced the footprints of Swami Vivekananda.⁹¹ Lay training, the need for a van for evangelism and the place of women in church life appeared as priorities in most diocesan reports.

A definite commitment to a holistic approach in terms of mission priority was seen in the diocesan reports. Dr. JR Chandran's report as moderator's commissary at the time in the Karnataka central diocese stated that

88. See Bishop Clarke's report, "Madras Diocese," *ibid.*, p. 129.

89. *Ibid.*, pp. 132f.; cf. pp. 140 (Madhya Kerala) and 226 (Vellore).

90. See Bishop Seth's report on North Kerala diocese, *ibid.*, pp. 149ff.

91. See Bishop Christdhas' report from Kanyakumari diocese, *ibid.*, pp. 84ff.

Mission is God's mission to make man a complete human being. This mission is to reveal to mankind God's action in Jesus Christ. The Church has no other Mission than to participate in God's Mission in the world. It addresses man in the totality of his being, individual and social, physical and spiritual, historical and eternal.⁹²

The church is called to practice mission in a particular context. The reality of the context is understood only when the social, economical, political and religious situations, nationally and locally, are studied. Such a study and analysis is the prime need in mission thinking. It automatically raises questions about the relevance of the structures of ministry. It leads then to corrective measures to the type of training of the clergy and laity. Thus, as a theological educator involved in the synod theological commission of the CSI, Chandran pointed out the fact that "the Pastors are not adequately equipped to carry on the ministry in the present-day context," and proposed the use of in-service training.

There was a total absence of reference to theological colleges in the whole report, except the references to diocesan evangelism training schools. But another theological educator, Bishop Victor Premasagar, dealt with "Pastoral Ministry and Theological Training."⁹³ He noted how "The emphasis on developmental and conscientising programmes have tended to undermine the importance of pastoral ministry," and argued in favour of pastoral ministry even for the developmental ministry of the church and her mission. The training of the laity, the training and use of lay honorary presbyters, and the need for theological educators to have pastoral experience in order for them to teach with a pastoral perspective, were some of his emphases. For the training of the laity most dioceses either already had or planned retreat centres. The Tirunelveli Diocese established its Krishnapillai Ecumenical Research and Dialogue Institute at Courtallam. Such research and seminar centres had so far been absent in southern sections of the CSI. Whereas the continuing education of the clergy was a concern, there was also priority given to the welfare of pastors. Provision of transport, wives' allowances and parsonage facilities were listed among diocesan priorities in most dioceses.

One gets a feeling that there was too much of a listing of needs in terms of funds expected from the synod for the many dioceses. Such funding-oriented prioritising was criticised by Bishop Clarke, who spoke of the need to talk of partnership in missions with the West and with the

92. See the report on "Karnataka Central Diocese," *ibid.*, pp. 92f.

93. See Victor Premasagar, "Pastoral Ministry and Theological Training," *ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

dioceses in order to promote real give and take of resources rather than dependency. His diocese had been involved in "Partnership in Mission" programmes with representatives of Western missions to discuss the ways of the "give and take" in the sharing of resources between the churches of the West and the East. Hence he foresaw a time when the Western churches might contribute monetary and other aids to the Church of South India, but equally draw from the riches of the CSI and other church groups in India, thus establishing a true partnership.

Thus in the priorities for mission of the church in India, the CSI saw the need for a qualitative and innovative contribution of her institutions, her members in various walks of life and her role in the development of Indian democracy with economic justice and prosperity for all. Mission was "evangelism plus." Such a trend was thoroughly acceptable to the ecumenical as well as the radical evangelical members of the CSI and other churches. But those who held the primacy and purity of evangelism as proclamation were critical that the CSI was going "liberal" and "worldly." Numerous new churches that arrived from North America, and some of the Pentecostal groups, made this their opportunity to criticize the CSI as not preaching the whole gospel. Their simple message of personal salvation with no care whatsoever for the larger social dimensions of the gospel appealed to many lay people, who left the CSI to join the new and (what were portrayed as) "pure" churches. Several evangelical parachurch agencies serve the people of the CSI and drew their staff and support from the CSI in an unofficial capacity. While this made some of the leaders emphasise the need for CSI members to support church-based and church-sponsored programmes, others opened their arms wide and embraced all shades of ministries and missions and worked with them.

Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses

The fact we should grasp at this point is the steady growth of the Church of South India towards a clearer concept of her mission in terms of her involvement in the actual struggles of the masses for human dignity and their liberation from varied forms of oppression. The specific affects of the "Church and Social Justice" consultation of 1974, the response to the emergency rule of Mrs. Gandhi and the increased level of the poverty of the masses, are to be seen reflected in the programmes of the CSI. We shall consider a document of the synod Relief and Development Committee to note this affect.

The Relief and Development Committee proposed its "Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses" to the synod working committee during 1983. After its approval, each of the twenty dioceses were asked to select

two rural parishes where rural development educators were to be placed for a two-year experimental period, with a view to select about 200 men, women and children and to impart the message and means of conscientization. The selection was at the convenience of the rural developmental educator, with the assistance of the local pastor. The plan was to select fifty people every six months and work with and through them. Monthly reports were to be sent to the local pastor, bishop and synod-level director of the programme. The programme started in April 1985 with 42 rural development educators working under the leadership of full-time synod director John S. Abraham, guided by the synod secretary Rev. M Azariah and the relief and development committee chairman Bishop Vasant P Dandin of North Karnataka diocese.

The whole programme was explained in the little booklet *Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses*,⁹⁴ and the programme itself was specifically known as the Comprehensive Rural Development Education Programme (CRDEP). In his foreword to the booklet, the then-moderator of the CSI, the Most Rev. I Jesudasan, commended the programme as seeking "to motivate and promote self realization through a process of conscientization...for socially and economically oppressed...faceless people;" and he went on to call "educated and dedicated young people...to take up the challenge of the exploited and socially oppressed masses and serve among them with missionary zeal." He did not directly say that this is mission, but Bishop VP Dandin in his message equates CRDEP with the mission of the church, the great task of "conscientization of the people who have been stripped of their rights and...reduced to the position of only beasts of burden." Rev. M Azariah saw this as "a basic revolution in the life of our most neglected rural people" in India.⁹⁵

The programme noted that "India lives in its villages" and the vast majority of the people are "rather 'like sheep without a shepherd' as Jesus would describe them (Mark 6:34)." They are "groping in darkness without any one to guide or offer any counsel." They have "got to be lifted up from the quagmire of their belief in fate, superstition, illiteracy, all resulting in social captivity." Their liberation from "alienation, segregation, discrimination, deprivation, degradation, oppression and domination" is a must.⁹⁶ Of the twenty million converts to Christian faith in India, 16 million come from the scheduled castes and 2 million from scheduled

94. See (John S. Abraham), *Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses*, Madras: CSI Synod Relief and Development Committee, 1985.

95. All three messages are from the unnumbered front pages of the above booklet.

96. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

tribes, thus indicating that the poor respond to the gospel first. By Christianization has not sufficiently altered the status of the converts in the country; the majority of them still remain among the poorer sections of the society.⁹⁷ This demands concrete action in terms of educating and enlightening the masses of people, Christians and others, who are "admittedly living outside the pale of Hindu four fold caste society...branded as 'Panchamas' (fifth people) and treated as 'Outcaste'...deeply 'Polluted' in their mind and soul" and kept under a "culture of silence."⁹⁸

Using the traditional missionary texts from the Bible, such as Isaiah "Whom shall I send and who will go for me? Here am I, Lord, Send Me" (6:8-10), the Nazareth Manifesto in Luke 4:18-21, and the parable of the last judgement in Mathew 25: 31-45, a missionary challenge to serve the cause of the emancipation of the "panchamas" was raised by CRDEP. It aimed at three A's; Awakening of the masses from their slumber of inferiority complex for self-understanding; creating Awareness that they are also created in the image of God and have self-dignity; and building confidence that they are fully Acceptable both to God and man in the one human family to live a life of self-reliance. CRDEP aimed to achieve this through a ten-point programme of conscientization of the rural masses.⁹⁹

97. See *ibid.*, p. 2. Statistics quoted from M Azariah's *Witnessing in India Today*, Madras: Diocesan Press for UELCI, 1983.

98. See *Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses*, pp. 7, 11.

99. See *ibid.*, pp. 4-5. The ten point programme was to help the rural masses realise "1. That they belong to one human family along with all others, to call upon God as 'our' Father (Luke 11:4); 2. That they have been created in God's own image like every other human being (Gen. 2:7) and that they belong together in mutual association with others in their own community; 3. That they have shed their inferiority complex, sense of shame and self-hatred that characterises their outlook on life and keeps them unorganised and in disunity even within their own community; 4. That they also have their responsibility to their neighbours as their brother's keepers (Gen. 4:9f) which would mean taking initiative in developing leaders from the community; 5. That the Church cares for them as Christ has called it to care specially for "the least of my brethren" (Mathew 25:40) and that the Church in fact has the duty to be the 'voice' of the voiceless and empower the powerless; 6. That their being treated by this caste-ridden society as outcastes and untouchables is certainly not due to fate or *karma* or due to any curse of God, but only due to their *culture of silence* and self-resignation; 7. That a conscious reflection on their own social reality of the local situation will reveal their own resources, abilities and potentialities for coping with daily life and for work for the liberation of the whole community; 8. That there are various amenities and opportunities available for them through the

Such conscientising was to be facilitated by attending to basic needs and concerns such as family health, practical education, skill for gainful employment, right belief to be free from superstitions, and civic sense of duties and rights as citizens of India. These were named the "Five Point Programme of CRDEP;" basic beliefs, basic health, basic teaching, basic skills and basic duties.

Basic belief would break the "culture of silence" into which people have been lulled by age-long ignorance and illiteracy. Basic education would provide "functional literacy" leading to "critical analysis" of asking why and understanding their rights. Basic skills would bring about self-reliance. Thus the rural masses could be liberated out of and undergo a radical therapeutic cleansing (catharsis of the psyche), removing the pollution of the psyche and twist in the mind. Conscientization would do this for the masses. Hence, as the Nazareth manifesto said, good news would be preached to the poor, release proclaimed to the captives, recovery of sight brought to the blind and the oppressed would be liberated. CRDEP expected a slow response from the rural masses; it was but natural for the oppressed to respond slowly in a world of "cut-throat competition." In Jesus' example, CRDEP proposed a "sitting where the people sat" and a meeting of the people at their own level, organising them and enabling them for life and life abundant.¹⁰⁰

Thus the CSI was moving into specific patterns of involvement in society with larger concerns for the liberation of people. Their identity, education, employment and dignity counted as much as their salvation. There was no undue dichotomy attempted between these interrelated aspects of what God in Christ was offering to the masses. The mission of proclamation evangelism was neither minimised nor neglected, but held alongside of other components in the context. A holistic mission theology and action was developing within the Church of South India. A look through the *Madras Diocesan News and Notes* for the past decades sufficiently proves the point. The demand, then, is for the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole population for a total impact.

church and government agencies for self growth. This adds hope in their life; 9. That it is possible with a new outlook on life for them to come out of their age-old superstitions and misbeliefs to overcome all servitude and slavery; and 10. That in today's changing India, avenues are open for them for self-development and ways and means of improving their status in society through self-help and cooperative efforts with other sections of society."

100. See a comparison of the way the people are (Ezekiel's experience at the time of Babylonian captivity, Psalm 137) and the way Jesus approached the unorganised (feeding of the five thousand, John 5:1-28); *ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

Theological Education in Relation to Developments in the CSI

As earlier noted, the Church of South India worked out its policies with regard to ministerial training, priorities and theology through its synod theological commission and synod and diocesan ministerial committees. The synod theological commission was led by the Rev. Dr. Joshua Russell Chandran as its convenor. He was an accepted leader and authority within the CSI by virtue of being the first and the long-standing Indian principal of the United Theological College for about three decades. Most leading clergymen and theological teachers in those thirty years were graduates of his college and he held a strong, bold and assertive leadership on theological views of the CSI. He was a committed ecumenical thinker, a leader in the peace movement, an ardent supporter of church union negotiations and a guard against the infiltration of new American church groups and their ideologies into the CSI. He denounced many of them as having no right to exist, and saw the church as already present in India as the central and essential reality of the faith community. Indicative of his trend of leadership was the way he questioned the visit of Dr. Billy Graham as special guest to lead the church in India to celebrate the gospel, as he said that the church in India was an adult church capable of carrying on its own celebration of the gospel without the aid of western leaders like Billy Graham.¹⁰¹ Chandran, as convenor of the synod theological commission, led the CSI into mature theological thinking and functioning. To provide for more adequate representation on the theological commission, the number of members on the commission were increased from twelve to fifteen in 1978, and alternates were named with the requirement that any member unable to attend a commission meeting should inform early enough to the moderator or general secretary in order that an alternate member should attend.¹⁰² The statement recorded by the commission in its meetings of 1977 reveals how seriously the commission took its role:

The Church is called to grow in maturity and in understanding of the faith. Constant watchfulness and critical evaluation are necessary about the different movements inside and outside the Church influencing the members. There are influences which distort the mission of the church through activities in different dioceses organised by other agencies, some of which are heavily financed

101. See JR Chandran, "Dr. Billy Graham's Good News Festivals in India," *NCCR* December 1977, pp. 599-601.

102. See "The Report of the CSI Synod Theological Commission for the Biennial Period 1976 & 1977," in *Draft Reports: Church of South India, Synod of January 1978, 16th session, 14-18 January 1978, Kottayam*, pp. 8ff, 21.

from outside. Careful scrutiny and evaluation of such programmes is necessary before they are sponsored by the Synod or any of the dioceses and also the follow-up programmes. The Church should be aware of the kind of teaching which some groups and organizations spread among its members.¹⁰³

The theological commission was of the mind that CSI-approved colleges should both train the ministry and provide theological students with methods and materials for proper Bible study to teach and train the laity, and also produce Christian education and Vacation Bible School literature for children and youth in conjunction with the NCCI.¹⁰⁴

The synod theological commission listed the following as the only approved colleges to train ministerial candidates for the Church of South India; the four regional colleges in South India, namely, the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, the Andhra Christian Theological College, the Kerala United Theological Seminary and the Karnataka Theological College; and the United Theological College of Bangalore. These institutions, except UTC which remained the English-medium college, took the recommendations of the Lindsay, Ranson and Harrison studies and grew by consolidating vernacular education with regional and local emphases. The commission also listed candidates trained at the Leonard Theological College (Jabalpur), Bishop's College (Calcutta) and Serampore College as acceptable for ministry in the CSI. There was openness to co-operate with and develop relationship with the Gurukul Theological College of the Lutherans at Madras. But graduates of any other seminaries had to undergo a year of "proper theological reorientation" at an accepted college if they were to enter the service of the CSI.¹⁰⁵

When the evangelical groups formed the Union Biblical Seminary as their own B.D. level college, the question arose if the CSI should support this seminary and use it as a training centre for CSI ministry. The synod theological commission reported that

in so far as C.S.I. is already committed to support the four regional seminaries in S. India and the United Theological College, Bangalore, there was no need for supporting another college outside the C.S.I. area.¹⁰⁶

The commission then went on to state clearly what was at the root of the divide between the ecumenical movement and the evangelicals;

103. *Ibid.*, section 9, p. 22.

104. *Ibid.*, section 9, p. 22.

105. *Ibid.*, section 10, p. 22.

106. See *ibid.*, section 10, p. 23.

theology and theological orientation! Let us quote the commission's own words:

Further, the theological orientation of the Yeotmal [Union Biblical Seminary] is also questionable and it would not be desirable for the C.S.I. to participate in its support without the possibility of being able to reshape its theological basis.¹⁰⁷

Whereas the ecumenical movement and the CSI were moving towards a holistic interpretation of the gospel and the mission of the church for India, with ecumenical perspectives such as participation in nation building, social justice and good news to the poor as economic betterment, they saw the evangelicals in the new churches of the West as neither sensitive to national aspirations nor dependent on native funds. They were theologically irrelevant to the contemporary setting of Indian society to which the gospel was proposed as "the answer." But if the gospel was to be presented as "the" answer to India's questions, then the question(s) of India must first be clearly heard and understood. At the All-India Christian Communication Seminar in 1978, Vinay Samuel made the criticism that evangelicals were not hearing the cry of the soul of India. The first thing to do was to "listen to that cry of the soul of India," and then alone can any communication be attempted.¹⁰⁸ The social, political, economic and other questions were ignored by the conservative evangelicals with their individualistic understanding of sin.¹⁰⁹ This has become increasingly unacceptable to the "radical" evangelicals.¹¹⁰

107. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

108. See Vinay Samuel's paper presented at the AICCS, Nagpur, 1978, where he expressed his frustration with the "uncontextuality of the evangelical evangelism/communication."

109. To vast majority of Indian evangelicals the question was that of "sin," "is there forgiveness?" and "the way of salvation." All other socio-political and economic questions were considered secondary and self-solving once the question of sin was solved. Hence the presentation of Jesus Christ as the Saviour who could be accepted through the simple methods illustrated in a step-by-step guide, an "ABCD of salvation (Admit you are a sinner, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Confess your sins to Him and Dedicate your Life to Him)" or "Four Spiritual Laws" of Bill Bright's multi-national Campus Crusade for Christ International Inc. Large quantities of such literature was printed abroad in the West and sent into countries like India to be distributed as easy steps to salvation.

110. The "radical evangelicals," as they are known, are those who identify themselves as evangelicals with a sincere commitment to biblical authority as well as to its contextual interpretation. They take social ethics seriously and align with the ecumenicals on matters of church unity, social justice and such. They have become increasingly noted after the ICOWE, Lausanne 1974. The

Union Biblical Seminary, South India Biblical Seminary (earlier Institute), Southern Asia Bible College, Hindustan Bible Institute, etc., were considered theologically unsuitable for training CSI ministry. After getting affiliated with the Senate of Serampore College at B.Th. level, the Hindustan Bible Institute sent the following two resolutions of its board to the then-moderator of CSI, the Most Rev P Solomon of Dornakal Diocese:

1. That in as much as Serampore had given affiliation for B.Th., the Institute be recognised by the CSI as one of the Institutions suitable for training for the Ministry.
2. That the Diocese send and support students for training at the Institute.¹¹¹

There was no request, but some sort of a decree! The moderator sought the opinion of Russell Chandran, and on his counsel the matter was kept pending for a study of the issues involved. The synod ministerial committee was requested to consider the matter and give guidance to the dioceses regarding the recognition of the training given in the above institute as a preparation for ordination in the CSI. Bishop Newbigin reported the mind of the ministerial committee:

1. HBI is an independent Institution not related to the CSI or any of the other churches which are members of the NCCI.
2. Its primary purpose is to train evangelists. It accepts candidates as individuals, and not as sponsored by the churches.
3. It has recently been affiliated to Serampore University at the L.Th. level.
4. We do not recommend dioceses to send their ordinands to HBI for training, but a graduate of HBI who offers to a diocese for Ordination should be considered on his merits and – if accepted – should be sent for appropriate additional studies to one of the CSI related institutions of ministerial training. A candidate who has secured the Serampore L.Th. at HBI could appropriately be given one year of additional training for ministry in the CSI.¹¹²

members of the Partnership in Mission group guided by men like John RW Stott, Waldron Scott and men of the Latin American Theological Fraternity have spearheaded this trend in the last two decades.

¹¹¹. See *Church of South India: The Synod Minutes of the Working Committee, Madras, 3 January, 4 March, 7 July and Executive Committee, Bangalore, 24–25, September 1970*, "W. C. 70–82: Recognition of Hindustan Bible Institute, Madras," p. 41.

¹¹². See *ibid.*, pp. 41f.

The synod executive committee adopted the above at its September 1970 meetings.¹¹³ What was decided about HBI became a guideline for the CSI opinion on other evangelical seminaries such as the South India Biblical Seminary, Southern Asia Bible College and others in the CSI area. Earlier we discussed the acceptance of UBS as an approved college by the synod of the CSI.

Though official recognition from the synod level was not given to these institutions, at diocesan levels and on personal levels several of the bishops of the CSI have supported them. For instance, South India Biblical Seminary received students sent by Bishops Sundar Clarke of Madras, MC Mani of Madhya Kerala, KC Seth of North Kerala and Jason Dharmaraj of Tirunelveli dioceses. Clarke, Mani, Kenneth Gill of Karnataka Central Dioceses as well as Bishop IP Andrews of the Church of North India have been on the SIBS governing council as chairmen. Thus there is democratic freedom within the CSI where ecumenical cooperation is possible between the church and evangelical parachurch institutions. This also reveals a dilemma of the bishops, who by their very office are placed under severe pressures, on the one hand to be pastoral leaders patronizing the many activities that take place in the wider church, and on the other hand to remain strict guards of the faith. It is often the case that the bishops reflect the indivisibility of the ecumenical and evangelical commitments within the church.

The CSI as a whole depends on the approved colleges, which are held together in theological thinking by the BTESSC. Karnataka Theological College at Balmata, Mangalore, has had fewer students and trained more in vocational and technical courses than in theology, influenced by the founding Basel Mission's methods. Kerala United Theological Seminary, Andhra Christian Theological College, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and United Theological College developed their work consistent with contemporary needs. The aspirations for evangelism, mission, social justice, participation in nation building and ecumenism are all catered for in the type of theological education developed in these colleges.

The discussions at CSI, NCCI and WCC conferences were reflected in the discussions of the BTESSC, and they soon affected theological education at the affiliated colleges. Course in "Modern Secular and Religious Movements in India," seminar courses on "The Church in Contemporary Society," courses in politics, social analysis, sociology, contemporary theology, Indian Christian theology; field exposure to the problems of slums and factory workers, internships with various specific

113. See *ibid.*, "EC 70-31: HBI," p. 65.

task groups and actual involvement in putting into practice what is being learnt on mission and ministry have all been newly added into theological education curricula since the sixties. After the emphasis on social justice and the need for Christians to understand society and its economic and power structures, courses in social analysis were introduced. To train teachers to teach sociology from Christian mission perspectives, an M.Th. in social analysis was introduced as a subject at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in the eighties. Thus the ordinands and lay leaders of the CSI were equipped with a contemporary and relevant theological orientation in keeping with what the church in South India and elsewhere was thinking and rethinking on the mission of the church in the world. In the next chapter we shall study TTS as an example of the development of relevant theological education in India.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

An Indian Experiment in Relevant Theological Education: Tamilnadu Theological Seminary

What the Lindsay and Ranson reports recommended on regional vernacular education came to fulfillment for the Tami-speaking people when the then-six Tamil dioceses of the CSI united their Tamilnadu Theological College of Thirumaraiyoor with the Gurusala Theological Seminary of the Tranquebar Lutherans and formed the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary,¹ at Arasaradi, Madurai,² in 1969. "Indigenization" with special emphasis on rural pastoral ministry and community living shaped the developments at TTS.³ It drew from the financial resources and educational principles of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches.⁴ In its second mandate, the TEF aided theological education in Third World countries, promoting contextually relevant patterns in the place of traditional ones.⁵ TTS became a major recipient of TEF grants in India, experimenting with views promoted by the TEF in pursuit of contemporary contextual relevance. Stephen Neill, Charles Ranson and Lesslie Newbigin, all of whom served in Tamilnadu and later became significant leaders of the World Council of Churches, the International Missionary Council and Theological Education Fund, had definite influences on TTS becoming an important place for TEF experiments. (An account of the influence of the TEF on Indian Theological Education is in the Appendix.)

1. TTS was inaugurated on 28 October 1969. See the inaugural address by Eric W Nielsen in *SIC*, March 1970, pp. 8f.

2. Madurai is a popular Tamil city with historical significance and linguistic pride. It was a centre of ancient Tamil culture and literature and host of the fifth World Conference on Tamil. The Meenakshi temple draws devotees and tourists in great numbers to the city. "Arasaradi" means under or at the feet of the king.

3. See Sam Amirtham in his article "On being an Enabler in Communication," in Gana Robinson (ed.), *Communicating the Gospel Today: Essays in Honour of Albert Devasirvatham Manuel*, Madurai: TTS, 1986, p. viii.

4. The Theological Education Fund was organised as a work of the International Missionary Council at its Ghana Assembly in 1958. For a detailed account of the history and effectiveness of TEF, see Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*, Madras: CLS for PTE/WCC, 1981.

5. *Ibid.*

In 1972, the first principal of TTS, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Amirtham, participated in the TEF consultation on "Theology in Action" at Manila⁶ and drew much impetus for the developments of TTS' own role in theological education in India. His successor, the Rev. Dr. Gnana Robinson, makes mention of this in his report to another consultation at Manila.⁷ An investigation into the programme of theological education at TTS shows the multi-pronged approach at TTS which attempted to cope with various challenges thrown at ministerial training programmes in contemporary India.

Theological Education from an Ecumenical Perspective

From the beginning there was an ecumenical scope both denominationally and geographically, as two colleges died to live as one. In the words of the late IRH Gnanadhasan, then moderator of the CSI, "God is taking His Church in to the world," as TTS catered to Tamils in India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia,⁸ and widened its scope to include the social, economic, political and religious struggles of the people into its agenda for theological understanding and ministerial formation. The proposal of regional colleges in the Lindsay and Ranson as well as Harrison reports was fulfilled in this co-operation of CSI and Lutheran streams.

Vernacular Theological Education

A major achievement at TTS was theological education in the heart language of the people - vernacular theological education as emphasised in the Lindsay, Ranson and Harrison reports. TTS enabled Tamil students to develop expertise in their own language for understanding and developing linguistic skills for communication of theology as well as to be able to read and draw from the rich deposit of theological insight in English literature. Gnana Robinson observed that TTS

became the first institution in India to offer theological training up to B.D. level in a regional language in India, a venture which was hitherto viewed by many theological educators as an impossibility because of the non-availability of theological books in regional languages.⁹

6. See the report of the consultation *Theology in Action*, Manila, September 1972, Geneva: TEF/WCC, 1972.

7. See Gnana Robinson, "Case Study No. 1: Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai, South India: A Move Towards a Tri-Frontal Theological Education" in *Ministerial Formation, Report of a Consultation at Manila, 7-10 July 1979*, Geneva: PTE/WCC, 1979, pp. 5-14.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

9. See Gnana Robinson, "A Move towards a Tri-frontal TE" *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Tamil Theological Literature

The desire to develop theological Tamil and Tamil theological literature led to various developments. When Bishop Stephen Neill advised the translation of Alan Richardson's *Theological Word Book*, "setting aside (his advice) with some daring" Albert D Manuel enlisted 37 contributors and produced a Theological Word Book of the Bible in Tamil.¹⁰ His intense desire to develop Tamil theological textbooks led him to organise a workshop using his own personal savings. He aimed first to train writers, and then to promote writing. In a collection of essays written in honour of AD Manuel, Samuel Amirtham recalled¹¹ how as a graduate of English-medium United Theological College, he felt ill-equipped to communicate in his own language, Tamil. The invitation to write a commentary on the book of Isaiah in Tamil, and his participation in the above workshop, helped his own theological vernacular development. Later TEF grants enabled the successful production of the Tamil Theological Text Books series with AD Manuel as editor.¹² His wife Vimala also contributed to the growth of Tamil Christian literature as the editor of the Christian Home Journal *Manai Malar*.¹³ The Tamil Theological Book Club grew with great enthusiasm. By 1974, there were 55 books published, 45 of which were original writings, and seven more were being written, of which six were original.¹⁴ TTS staff contributed to these. When AD Manuel, who taught at Tamilnadu Theological College and Seminary, became the first Indian general secretary of the Christian Literature Society, Tamil theological literature developed further.

In the eighties TTS sent one of its staff members, J Gnanaseelan Muthuraj, to visit nearly fifty libraries and archives in England and Europe and to compile *A Bibliography of Tamil Christian Writings in the Libraries of U.K. and Europe*.¹⁵ Muthuraj compiled the Tamil section of the

10. See Samuel Amirtham, "On being an Enabler of Communication" *op. cit.*, p. ix.

11. *Ibid.*, p. v.

12. TTS and CLS worked together to produce a whole range of theological text books and commentaries in Tamil. TTS has further produced its own staff publications.

13. Earlier, Professor Ponnu A Sathyasatchi of Voorhees College, Vellore edited *Manai Malar*. The author remembers how popular this journal was among the ordinary and the educated and how he read it with great enthusiasm during his secondary school days.

14. See Lienemann-Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 77. See the table giving details on the text book programme sponsored by TEF in India.

15. Madurai: TTBC/TTS Publication, 1986.

bibliography of national writings with Serampore University, which had about 3000 entries of Tamil materials both published and unpublished.¹⁶ This superseded Ziegenbalg's *Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bucher*, a catalogue of Tamil books with 112 entries in 1709; the *Biblioteca Tamulica* of 1731; John Murdoch's *Classified Catalogue of Tamil Printed Books with Introductory Notices* of 1865 with 700 Tamil Christian writings; AC Clayton's *Report on Tamil Christian Literature* of 1917 with 500 writings referred; and the *UTC Bibliography* of 1969 with nearly 100 Tamil Christian writings.¹⁷ In such compiling of vernacular writings, Muthuraj suggested that

It is very important to see how native language has permeated into the structures of theological thinking, ecclesiology and various historical accounts, the failures, struggles and achievements of the community of Tamil Christians, Missionaries and Mission Board.¹⁸

TTS began to collect archival material, diaries, manuscripts, palm-leaves and mission records of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; microfilms and photocopies of eighteenth century correspondences and twelfth century copper plates as well as museum articles to depict Tamil Christian history.¹⁹

The Tamil Theological Book Club produced textbooks at post-graduate level in support of theological education in Tamil, since vernacular studies up to doctoral degree were made possible at TTS in conjunction with the Madurai University²⁰ (M.A. in philosophy and religion, M.Th. in various disciplines and Ph.D. in link with Serampore and Madurai Kamraj Universities in Tamil medium). TTS, in co-operation with the Roman Catholics, raised rupees 500,000 to institute a chair of Christianity at the Madurai Kamraj University.²¹ Thus, TTS has "proved that theological

16. See JG Muthuraj, "Native Sources for the Study of Missions in India," in *Mission Studies*, Journal of the IAMS, No. 1, 1984, pp. 97-102.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 97. Cf. JG Muthuraj, "A Search for Tamil Christian Writings in the Libraries of Europe and Its Relevance for the Understanding of the History of the Tamil Church," *AJTR*, 1:2, 1985, pp. 11-23.

19. See JG Muthuraj's report as coordinator and assistant editor of the Tamil Theological Book Club and Archives, in *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, the Fifteenth Annual Report 1983-84 of Principal Gnana Robinson of TTS to the Governing Council on March 1984, Appendix 15, pp. xxiv-xxvi. Similarly, in *Called to Obedience*, Sixteenth Annual Report, pp. 20f.

20. *Called to Obedience*, p. 20.

21. See Gnana Robinson's 15th and 16th annual reports, *op. cit.*, Appendix 1, where in both he comments on these developments.

education can more effectively be done in regional languages not only at graduate level, but also at post-graduate levels.²²

Iraiyiyal Malar is the theological organ of TTS in Tamil. Its editor, C Lawrence, wrote that

Though we do not subscribe to the view "Publish or perish," we cannot really justify our existence as a theological community without a regular and systematic discipline of contributing our share to theological literature. In our ministry, *Iraiyiyal Malar* has faithfully and humbly played its role - of course with ups and downs.

Iraiyiyal Malar had 650 subscribers and 22 life members; but there was an attempt to find 2000 subscribers and 50 life members to make it self-supporting by 1990.²⁴

From 1985, TTS also developed its *Arasaradi Journal of Theological Reflection (AJTR)* in English for wider circulation.²⁵ Staff were encouraged to continuously contribute to the developing theological literature. Their active endeavour to produce indigenous and vernacular theological literature was revealed in the long lists of staff writings listed for each year in the annual reports. The communications department offered regular courses such as the theology of and methods of communication, family, rural and speech communications, special courses in homiletics, dramatics, journalism, puppetry, photography and posters. The department ran workshops, exhibitions, seminars and published a news magazine, *Pasumai Cheithigal*.²⁶

"Freedom to Experiment" A Search for Relevant Theological Education

Beside regular academic learning of the traditional courses in Old and New Testaments, church history, theology, religions and practical theology, TTS' view of mission and ministry motivated innovative developments and provided the necessary freedom of experimentation.²⁷ Samuel Amirtham explained it as "New Styles in Theological Education," new styles in learning, living, spirituality and ministry, experimented as

22. See *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, op. cit., Appendix 13, p. xxi.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. xxii-xxiii, quoting TTS staff Regi Chandra.

24. See Gnana Robinson, "A Move towards Tri-frontal Approach" op. cit., p. 5.

25. See Robinson's report *Called to Obedience*, p. xix; *AJTR* 1:1, July 1985.

26. See Robinson's report *Called to Obedience*, p. xix; *AJTR* 1:1, July 1985.

27. Its "high standard" was commended by Lesslie Newbigin, J Russell Chandran and others. See *AJTR*, 1:2, October-December, 1985, pp. iii-iv.

28. See CRW David, director of communications department, in both the reports, op. cit., Appendix 2 in each case.

29. In Ministerial Formation (PTE/WCC), 2, January 1978, pp. 3-8.

- i. Praxis model for learning;
- ii. Pilgrim model for residence off-campus;
- iii. Gurukulam model for community living; and
- iv. Mission model for ministerial training.²⁸

As we shall soon discuss, the seminary community is involved in various ways in society. Students are required to stay off-campus in a village or slum setting to go through the natural struggles of people. Though some students may have come from a village or slum background themselves, others may not have been aware of or sensitive to the actual struggles of the people. Now that they were preparing to serve society in the name of God and his redemption, they needed to understand society and its dynamics from a theological angle in order that they could serve it relevantly. TTS opted for an "action-reflection" style of learning. A sense of community within the seminary and a sense of mission towards the wider society enhanced the type of ministerial training that a student received at TTS. The impetus for indigenization and contextualization at TTS was furthered through the influences of the TEF. Amirtham, after his participation at the Manila "Theology in Action" consultation, gave leadership to numerous developments at TTS, so much so that the then-director of the programme for theological education, Aharon Sapsezian commented in 1979 that

This dynamic and creative seminary has become noted for its efforts to evolve a new style of *learning*, of *ministry*, of *living* and of *spirituality*...It is rightly regarded by many as a model of contextual theological education in India.²⁹

The creative efforts were furthered by the second Principal, Gnana Robinson, who saw theological education at TTS as an expression of the concern for contextualization and took the "context of the poor in India" and the "pluralistic religio-cultural context" seriously in shaping TTS as a whole. His writings reveal his enlarged concern.³⁰

Concern for Evangelism and Missions

Evangelism of the traditional style is catered for through the mission institute. Its director reported in 1984-85 that fifty TTS students

28. See Samuel Amirtham, "Some New Emphases in Theological Education at Arasaradi," in the volume edited by himself, *A Vision for Man: Essays in Honour of JR Chandran*, Madras: CLS, 1978, pp. 143-151.

29. See Aharon Sapsezian, "Exploring the Nature of Ministerial Formation," *MF*, 5, January 1979, pp. 20-23, especially p. 22.

30. See the bibliography for a listing of Gnana Robinson's writings.

participated in the proclamation of the gospel in over 35 places in and around Madurai.³¹ Once a week they visited those places to share the good news with those who are under-privileged. Their work involved Sunday School teaching, open-air preaching, personal dialogue with people of other religions, singing, tract and scripture distribution, *kathakalatchebam* (recital of stories with music and songs), drama, puppet and film shows. They were "surprised at the friendship extended" and "the eagerness to listen to the Gospel."³² Invited by churches, student teams went on "outreach programmes, evangelistic tours" and also summer "rural evangelistic projects." Every Saturday, prayer for evangelism and mission, followed by discussion and Bible study, drew students and staff to the chapel. Students with particular interest were sent to places of specific training, such as the summer school of evangelism at SIBS, the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, practical work placement with pioneer missionaries and evangelists, first-aid training at a mission hospital, etc.³³ Recognising the centrality of the local church for evangelism, TTS placed thirteen fellowship groups from the student body with thirteen local congregations in Madurai, to join hands with the laity in preaching the gospel to villages.³⁴ In all these evangelistic activities, TTS was similar to the conservative evangelical seminaries in India. But TTS recognised evangelism as much more than these activities.

Inter-faith Dialogue

Staff members Dayanandan Francis, CRW David and Thomas Thangaraj started a Religious Friends Circle, which brought together Saivites and Christians once every month. Harmony was aroused through this among religiously minded people.

The importance of inter-religious harmony has been felt more and more in the light of the recent communal unrests...and the need for proper understanding between different religions and their co-operation in the nation-building.³⁵

31. See report by DW Jesudoss, in *Called to Obedience*, op. cit., p. 11, Appendix 8.

32. See report by R. Sunny Yesudian, in *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, op. cit., pp. xiii-xvii, Appendix 9.

33. *Called to Obedience*, op. cit., p. 13. The author remembers TTS students who attended the SIBS summer school of evangelism in the late seventies and his own interaction with them as a staff member of SIBS.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14, and *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, op. cit., pp. xiii-xvii.

35. See S Israel's report on "Inter-faith Dialogue" in *Called to Obedience*, op. cit., p. 15.

Contextual Interpretation of Mission and Evangelism

TTS understood mission as more than "evangelism" of the type characteristic of the conservative evangelicals. Taking the social context seriously, TTS interpreted mission in terms of the felt needs and social realities of Tamilnadu, India and Asia. Here not only the Theological Education Fund, but also the Board of Theological Education of the Serampore College and the National Christian Council, with its arm such as the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the Urban Industrial Rural Mission, enhanced the contextual interpretation of mission. Such interpretation demanded the staff at TTS to study and think relevantly on their role in theological education.

During the 1983-84 academic year, TTS had an extended workshop on "Faith and Action in the Context of Poverty and Wealth,"³⁶ led by C. Kurien of the Madras Institute of Development Studies.³⁷ Kambar Manikam's survey of Bible verses displayed on walls in Christian homes and the motivating world view, and Baas Wielenga's "Biblical Reflections on Poverty and Wealth" were also used in the workshop. Evangelism and its relationship to social involvement was focussed on throughout the year.³⁸

Christian evangelistic activity is scrutinised with critical eyes by forces that claim to be patriotic and nationalistic. The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and related groups study and have "published extensive studies of social action programmes as promoted by CISRS and similar institutions," and "interpreted them as new evangelistic efforts towards the expansion of church power in the guise of struggle for justice." They attacked the attempts of the Rural Theological Institute of TTS and World Vision of India as conversion oriented. Staff and student seminars were held at TTS to clarify issues involved in this criticism. Papers presented by Dhyanchand Carr, B Jeyaraj, Sunny Yesudian and Bastiaan Wielenga, a survey of evangelistic work done by CSI and Lutheran churches in Madurai and documents from world conferences of evangelism were discussed at such seminars. As a result,

36. See Bastiaan Wielenga's report on staff seminars in *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, *op. cit.*, pp. vi-ix.

37. After retirement from his leadership roles as the first Indian principal of Madras Christian College and vice-chancellor of North Eastern Hill University Shillong, Dr. Chandran Devanesan started and directed this Institute for Development Studies at Madras, until his sudden death in 1983.

38. See *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

1. The Church-as-lifeboat and salvation-from-hell theology were rejected as a caricature of the good news. It was the Wheaton declaration "The Church in Response to Human Need," and not the theses of the Amsterdam Conference of Itinerant Evangelists which found appreciation.³⁹

It was felt that

2. Traditional forms of evangelism as surveyed in Madurai suffer from theological and practical deficiencies.
3. The good news of the Kingdom is not a matter of verbal proclamation only, but implies a practice of healing, struggle for justice, etc.⁴⁰

Rural Theological Institute (RTI) and Other Structures that Enabled Relevant Theological Education at TTS

The rural and urban twin context for ministry shaped the type of theological orientation and education offered by TTS. Students were placed in slums for a term, to live in and learn the conditions of the rural poor. Internship⁴¹ provided the much-needed width to students' understanding of ministry. The Rural Theological Institute⁴² was a programme of TTS, wherein a group of students were enabled to do their own theological reflection and studied in a rural setting. Set in a village area outside the city of Madurai, RTI had a farm and limited facilities maintained by TTS. Its director, the Rev. Dr. Dayachand Carr, his family and a team of 12 to 16 students each semester lived on the RTI campus. They, with the farm workers, involved themselves in various forms of rural development work as part of their preparation for ministry. Carr reported that

Our areas of involvement are Community Health and Health Education, Economic Development through self employment schemes both on an individual level and through forming co-

39. *Ibid.* The Wheaton Declaration was issued by the Wheaton 1983 conference on "The Nature and Mission of the Church," sponsored by the co-operative effort of the Strategy Working Group of the LCWE and the Missions Commission of the WEF, Partnership in Mission and the Catalyst Committee of Edinburgh 1980. The Amsterdam Conference of Itinerant Evangelism was called by Billy Graham in 1983 and again in 1986.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, pp. xviii-xxi, Appendix 10; *Called to Obedience*, pp. 15-17, Appendix 9.

42. Cf. *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, pp. xxvi-xxxvi, Appendix 16; and *Called to Obedience*, pp. 21-25, Appendix 14.

operatives; and creating an awareness about unjust structures and unjust practices arising from wanton selfish behaviour as well as from longstanding traditional values thoughtlessly adhered to.⁴³

TTS-RTI involvement in surrounding villages enabled the staff and students to identify the forms of oppression suffered by people, and to organise protests demanding justice. The structures of evil reacted with violence when RTI started to challenge them. Gnana Robinson reported that Dhyanchand and his wife Padmini suffered "several threats" to their safety, and "several false cases" were framed against them.⁴⁴ Evaluating the work of RTI, Carr said that they learned very many good lessons through their participation with the oppressed poor.⁴⁵

RTI helped to distinguish the relationship between evangelism and development. An exclusive emphasis on personal salvation to the neglect of corporate salvation, and a naive assumption that riches prove God's blessing were questioned by Carr. The health-wealth-success theology that had become popular in certain Charismatic and conservative circles in the West was also popular in several circles in the Indian church, popularised by many lay theologians. Sorting through popular opinions and shifting to sound understanding was hard for theological students and staff. Carr narrated numerous incidents of TTS-RTI involvement in his reports and concluded that TTS had taken quick steps and "acted on impulse" rather than carefully.⁴⁶

By their involvement in society through RTI, urban and rural development programmes, the congregation-based community development movement and several others, TTS staff and students were awakened to the felt needs and hurts of the people. As a result of this process of conscientization, they took sides with the poor, oppressed and hurt masses and fought their cause with rich land owners, police and government authorities. The Peoples Movement for Women's Rights (PMWR)⁴⁷ represented the cause of rape victims and Dalit women and their oppression to the authorities concerned. Urban and rural development organizers organised nursery schools, sewing classes, medical and health education camps, seminars for youth and employment

43. See Dhyanchand Carr, "An Evaluation of the TTS and RTI Projects," *TRACI Journal*, no. 19, April 1981, pp. 19-23, especially p. 21.

44. See *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, p. 9.

45. Carr, "An Evaluation", *op. cit.*, p. 23.

46. *Called to Obedience*, p. 21.

47. See Principal's Reports cited above for details on this and the following activities of TTS.

help to unemployed youth. Work with scavengers, domestic servants and palmyra tree climbers (toddy tappers) organised them for better standards in terms of wages and work conditions. Ministry to prisoners and prisoners' families, refugees from Sri Lanka, Education for Social Welfare of the Oppressed (ESWO), and various other activities were taken up through Peoples Association for Social Action (PASA). *Arulagam* was the TTS "home for the rehabilitation of girls caught up in immoral traffic;" *Inba Illam* sheltered destitute old people; *Siloam Farm* catered to lepers and *Makkal Nagar* housed repatriates from Sri Lanka.

In all these, the hunger for justice and the establishing of human rights dominated social involvements of the students and staff of TTS. Samuel Amirtham found the biblical basis for these activities in Micah 6:8:⁴⁸

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Gnana Robinson also articulated this concern in his writings and reports on the rehabilitation of 300 unfortunate girls by *Arulagam* and the schooling of over three hundred children of prisoners in various parts of Tamilnadu. As TTS started "conscientising and organising people for fighting for a just socio-economic order," he found "open conflicts between the rich and the poor have started taking place." The TTS publication *Solidarity of the Oppressed* narrated two such incidents.⁴⁹ Robinson wrote that

When one is concerned with social justice, personal interests are put in tension with social concerns; institutional interests go on the way of community interest. The question is whether we as Christians can stand for justice without making compromises, personally and institutionally.⁵⁰

TTS faced many situations which demanded compromise. For example, when the Madurai city corporation levied exorbitant building taxes on TTS (of a hundred thousand rupees), TTS approached the authorities

48. The author cites from personal knowledge of Dr. Amirtham's emphasis on this theme in his speaking at the SIBS chapel, where the author was principal and had invited Dr. Amirtham (by then director of PTE/WCC) to address the staff and students in a special chapel service.

49. Gnana Robinson deals with these in his article "TTS Experiences in Theological Education" in *EAJT*, 1:2, 1983, pp. 1-10, p. 4.

50. Gnana Robinson's letter to the author dated 15 March 1984.

formal" theological education by extension programme through TECCA Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action.⁵⁹ This, Pothirajulu, said "should inevitably lead to the edging out of the priestly class (the theologians) to the enabling of the priestly race (the laity) to make decisions in life as if the theologians did not exist."⁶⁰

TECCA was offered to people in various secular professions who desired theological insights to sharpen their understanding of the Christian faith and action. The course was spread over a two year period in five units of two months duration each year.

Already 600 had completed the course by 1982, and 250 were enrolled in 1983. During 1983–85, TECCA helped 197 laymen and women in six centres; Madurai - 52, Meignanapuram - 26, Trichy - 20, Coimbatore - 25, Tirukkoilur - 39 and Ranipet - 35.⁶¹ A special rural TECCA was also developed to encourage lay leadership in the rural churches.⁶² With the "virtual breakdown...of the teacher-catechist system" in the post-democratic period, the church in rural Tamilnadu had "nothing ready to take its place."⁶³ There came a need for discovering an Indian equivalent to the "celebrators," "theologians," "teachers," "co-ordinators," and "discussion leaders" among the laity for the ministry of the coming "Church-for-others."⁶⁴

Staff Seminars and Workshops

On-going training allowed for creative thinking and theologising. The findings from their own post-graduate research provided a starting point for shared learning.⁶⁵ Papers presented by staff from their fields of theological study accentuated an awareness of all staff and enabled interdisciplinary, holistic theological reflection on the part of the staff. This in turn affected their didactic role and function. Their teaching and interaction with students turned holistic and interdisciplinary. The papers presented were modified and made available to a wider audience through TTS and other publications, periodicals and books, thus providing a fresh supply of Christian literature.

59. See D Pothirajulu, "Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action (TECCA)," *SIC*, July, 975, pp. 7f.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

61. See Gnana Robinson, "TTS Experiences" *op. cit.*, p. 7, and S Israel's report in *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, pp. iv–v.

62. See Edward Ramani's report in *Called to Obedience*, pp. 3f.

63. Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

64. *Ibid.*

65. See Bastiaan Wielenga's report on staff seminars in *Living, Learning, Witnessing*, pp. vi–ix.

Post-Graduate Programmes at TTS

Through the institute of post-graduate studies, TTS was linked with Madurai Kamraj University and offered courses in philosophy and religion.⁶⁶ This enabled the development of authentic and indigenous study and practice. Affiliation to Serampore University and interaction with the Serampore family of colleges provided for theological development in keeping with (at times ahead of) national developments in theology.

Theological Education as Rooted in the Church

As noted earlier, the Tamil dioceses of the Church of South India and the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church together formed TTS. About ten bishops, some presbyters and some lay persons formed the governing council. They took active part in studying the programme of TTS and in criticizing, correcting, enriching and guiding relevant training of the ministry. Robinson referred to the seminars⁶⁷ that preceded the annual meetings and the active participation of governing council members in the discussions. Thus theological education at TTS remained the task of the church, while not being governed by the church institutionally. Thus TTS and the church exercised mutual dialogue and influence.

Though TTS contextually developed its theological education programme in keeping with Indian and ecumenical researches, studies and findings, and though students obtain insight into relevant patterns of ministry, the church and Christian population were bound to a traditional understanding of what the church is and what her mission is. There was frequent criticism of the products of TTS as ill-equipped for spiritual ministry. But as a stream of TTS graduates got to work in the churches, the hope was that traditional attitudes might change and relevant approaches might take root for the good of the whole church in due course.⁶⁸ Such a hope motivated TTS. It saw itself as involved in an "exploration" which continued, and the exploration faced ambiguities.

66. *Ibid.*, p. i, Appendix 1. Cf. *Called to Obedience*, p. 1, Appendix 1.

67. Gnana Robinson, "TTS Experiences," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

68. When a graduate of TTS, the Rev. John Wesley, pastored in the Nagari area, there were conversions from Hinduism to Christ followed by baptism of over 150 adults. Such results are hard to obtain within a short period of three years; many evangelical seminary graduates do not find such results. Wesley, who worked with a social consciousness, later was one of the first two to obtain the M.Th. in social analysis when TTS offered the course. Here we find the blend of evangelical fervour and social consciousness of an ecumenical variety.

tensions and challenges.⁶⁹ How much to involve and where to draw the line remained ambiguous. Tension between academic excellence and practical relevance continued. Maintaining a balance between faith commitment and social involvement remains a challenge. TTS had its chapel at the centre of its campus, and attempted to focus all its activities from that centre and "for the sake of the gospel."⁷⁰

A Balanced and Relevant Theological Education Programme

Evangelization or nation building? Whereas preference to one would lead to negligence of the other, TTS attempted to maintain a balance. The leaders of TTS claimed it was not always easy to maintain an equal emphasis when the context pressed for socio-economic activity. But the creative width of developments at TTS in evangelism, mission, literature production, inter-faith dialogue, lay training, socio-political-economic involvement, rural concern and the church's renewal concern, made TTS stand out as an example for relevance in Indian theological education.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

70. Under its first principal the expression "For the Sake of the Gospel" has become a motivating slogan at TTS, so much so that TTS has published a collection of essays in his honour titling it with the same. See Gnana Robinson (ed.), *For the Sake of the Gospel: Essays in Honour of Samuel Amirtham*, Madurai: TTS Publications, 1980, pp. 284.

PART SIX

Conclusion

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Search for Relevance in Mission, Ministry and Theological Education: A Continuing Task of the Church in India

This chapter summarises all that has been discussed thus far in this book, followed by concluding observations and evaluatory comments.

Mission, Ministry and Theological Education in India, 1947–1987: A Summary

When India became a secular democracy in 1947,¹ Indian Christians began to rethink the mission of the church in the new Indian setting. This kind of rethinking was not new or peculiar to India. In the history of the church rethinking brought forth men who motivated major events such as the Reformation, the Wesleyan revival, the age of missionary societies, the ecumenical movement, etc. Rethinking mission on a global scale had its beginnings from the early decades of the twentieth century, in the World Missionary Conferences and the International Missionary Council's many gatherings.² Studies on the place of other religions, the Hocking Report on *Rethinking Missions*, and educational, agricultural and medical missionary involvements of several missionary societies, all were preludes to a wider understanding of the mission of the church as more than what was traditionally described as evangelism.³ Members of the Rethinking Group in Madras raised bold questions on the nature, function

1. For the event of national independence in 1947, see Chapter 1.

2. The many volumes of reports of these conferences provide ample proof for the rethinking that went on in these worldwide conferences. Earlier they were dominated by Western missionaries and church leaders, but the number of representatives of the younger churches steadily grew higher and in the later part of the sixties and certainly in the seventies and eighties, Third World representatives held significant leadership in the rethinking process in ecumenical world conferences.

3. The 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, in its Commission IV dealing with "The Christian Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions," collected evidence of actual situations in the mission fields from both missionaries and native Christians. See the unpublished collection by D. S. Cairns (Volume III: India) held at the University Archives, University of Aberdeen, Scotland. William Hocking undertook to lead the "Laymen's Enquiry into Foreign

and the purpose of the church for India. They searched for and suggested indigenous alternates.⁴ Such rethinkings gave rise to what is identified as Indian Christian theology.⁵ The birth of independent new nations in the mid-twentieth century aroused churches in India and elsewhere to attempt studies on the effects of the "rapid social change,"⁶ and the way forward for "Christian Witness in the midst of Social Change."⁷

In India, the result of the rethinking was seen in the church union of 1947⁸ and in the national structures established for research into the religious, economic, cultural and social realities of India, to rethink and to reformulate new and relevant concepts of mission and ministry for the particular setting of India.

Divisions within the church contributed to the falsification of the credibility of the gospel of peace in a land torn with regional, communal, linguistic and religious factionalism in politics. The "disunity of the Christians" was a "public contradiction of the gospel,"⁹ and it was challenged in India. The "Call to Mission" sounded a "Call to Unity,"¹⁰ and major denominations at first in South India and then in North India

Missions" and wrote the report *Rethinking Missions*, New York: Harper Brothers, 1932, and this had a great impact on the rethinking process of missions around the world. See Sam Higginbottom, *The Gospel and the Plow or The Gospel and Modern Farming in Ancient India*, New York: MacMillan, 1921; Kenyon L. Butterfield, *The Rural Mission of the Church in Eastern Asia: Reports and Recommendations*, New York: IMC, 1931; AB Van Doren, *Fourteen Experiments in Rural Education*, Calcutta, 1929; WJ McKee, *Developing a Proper Curriculum for Village Schools in India*, Calcutta, 1930; *The Ministry of Healing in India: Handbook of the Christian Medical Association in India*, Mysore: Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1932.

4. See DM Devasahayam, AN Sundarisanam, GV Job, et al., *Rethinking Christianity in India*, Madras: Hogarth Pres, 1938.

5. See Chapter 2. The best concise work available on this is that of Robin HS Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1969, 1975.

6. See Paul Abrecht, *The Churches and Rapid Social Change*, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961; E. de Vries, *Man in Rapid Social Change*, London: SCM Press, 1961.

7. See Kyaw Than (ed.), *Witnesses Together*, Report of the East Asia Christian Conference at Kuala Lumpur, 1959, which conference had a whole section on "Christian Witness in the Midst of Social Change."

8. See Chapter 1.

9. Lesslie Newbigin, in a radio broadcast on 13 October 1953; quoted by R. D. Paul, *The First Decade: An Account of the CSI*, Madras: CLS, 1958, p. 1.

10. See Lesslie Newbigin, "The Call to Mission: A Call to Unity?" in Peter

united to form the Church of South India and then the Church of North India.¹¹ Negotiations with Lutherans and American Methodists turned fruitless.¹² The impoverishment of dependency continued among several groups and hindered unity within the Indian church. The Church of South India and the Church of North India attained a better relationship with the indigenous Mar Thoma Church through a joint council. The joint council was "the visible organ for common action" by the CSI, CNI and the Mar Thoma Church,

which recognise themselves as belonging to the one Church of Jesus Christ in India even while they remain as autonomous Churches, each having its own identity of traditions and organisational structures.¹³

They already possessed unity by being in full communion with one another, by their common acceptance of scripture and creeds, by mutual acceptance of one another's baptism, eucharist and ministry. The joint council became a "unique 'model' of expressing as well as further deepening of the 'organic oneness' being realised by the three Churches as components of the one Church."¹⁴ After four years of progress in joint-action, the joint council in its third meeting at Madras, 22-24 January 1983, recognised the need for a common name and proposed the name "The Church of India," a name to be adopted if agreed by all three churches. But they opted against merger, and continued with the joint

Beyerhaus and CF Hallencreutz (eds.), *The Church Crossing Frontiers*, Uppsala: Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XI, 1969, pp. 256-264.

11. See Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press; DM Kennedy, "The CNI History," *ICHR*, VI:2, 1972 & VII:1, 1973; WJ Marshall, *Faith and Order in the North India/Pakistan Plan*, London: Friends of CNI, 1978; Bishop Kennedy criticises that there was no CNI history similar to Sundkler's work on the CSI. See his *Light from Any Quarter?*, Ecumenical-Evangelical Studies in World Christian Mission, Belfast: Ulster Services, 1982, p. 5.

12. Though theological reasons were often verbalised and alluded to when justifying their separate identities, the real reasons for their unwillingness to unite were rooted in financial prosperity. They benefited from large sums contributed by their parent missions. Union would have meant a sharing of these sums with all. This was indicated by Dr. John T Seamands (whose parents, brother and he himself were American Methodist missionaries to India and served in the Deccan belt) at Asbury Theological Seminary in his missions lectures attended by the author during his studentship.

13. See the news item "Praising God for the Prospect of a United Church in India," *Madras Diocesan News and Notes*, 17:2, February 1983, pp. 52f.

14. *Ibid.*

council, co-operating extensively. They along with the other churches satisfy themselves with the conciliar unity provided in the National Christian Council.¹⁵

The National Christian Council, through its Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society,¹⁶ developed a social mission for the church in India,¹⁷ which we interpreted from Devanandan¹⁸ and Thomas¹⁹ as "nation building" and "social action," mission as *lokasangraha* and mission as *karma marga*. Since wider social concern demanded that the Christian minority community cooperate and work together with the majority non-Christian community, the major thrust of Christian mission was seen by the National Christian Council as Christian participation in nation building.²⁰ Such participation required secular cooperation in the secular democracy of India. The Christian, in order to participate with people of other faiths, had to go beyond his religious confines and promote inter-religious cooperation, through inter-faith dialogue. Christians, because of their insistence on conversion, baptism and church membership, were already suspected and blamed of religious imperialism and proselytism.²¹ Hence, dialogue for cooperative social action and nation building demanded a reinterpretation of evangelism and evangelistic methods.²²

A considerable sector of the church in India resided in new denominations characterised as the conservative evangelical churches. They, along with those in the historic churches who identified themselves as evangelicals, were unhappy about this increased social concern and the reinterpretation of evangelism. They imbibed the view that the National Christian Council was not concerned about evangelism, but was more interested in social, political and economic questions, and had a diluted

15. See Chapter 1.

16. See Chapter 5.

17. See this described in the works of Bengt R Hoffman, *Christian Social Thought in India, 1947-1962*, Bangalore: CISRS Social Concerns Series no. 14, 1967; and Godwin Shiri, *Christian Social Thought in India, 1962-1977*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1982.

18. See Chapter 3.

19. See Chapter 4.

20. See this expressed in the several studies in connection with rapid social change and the summing up of the reports in PD Devanandan and MM Thomas (eds.), *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: NCCI and CISRS, 1960.

21. See C. Rajagopalachari's response "Is Any Missionary Activity Justifiable?" in Blaise Leval (ed.) *Revolution in Missions: The Role of Missions in Present Day India*, Vellore: Popular Press, 1957, pp. 5f.

22. See this discussed in connection with Samartha's views in Chapter 7.

concept of sin and salvation in Christ. This view was emerging more from the Western churches, particularly in North America where the polarisation between ecumenical Christians and those who considered themselves evangelical Christians was getting wider. American spiritual influence coupled with its dollar power was able to obtain as well as buy up a following from Third World Christians, including many in India. The American National Association of Evangelicals led the formation of a world network of evangelicals, and on the occasion of the centenary of the Evangelical Alliance,²³ national evangelical associations were formed in many countries, including India. The World Evangelical Fellowship was born in 1951. Evangelicals took it upon themselves to defend the gospel from what they rejected as ecumenical liberalism. They strengthened their views of mission as primarily evangelism, and structured themselves for active evangelization. We took note of the developments in India in the Evangelical Fellowship of India, its branch structures, the evangelistic parachurch ministries and indigenous mission societies and training centres, formed in the fifties and after.²⁴

Unfortunately, the two emphases, nation building and evangelization, began to run parallel, without meeting to cooperate. Neither could be ignored by the church in India and neither could do away with the other. Differences and competitive parallelism could have ceased if the two views were brought to interaction within the Indian soil. But dialogue between the two grew thin as the international structures influenced, financed and perpetuated the unfortunate twin structures. Indian voices that articulated for the church to be one and holistic were muffled when they spoke in favour of a balance between both evangelical and

23. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846 in London to "associate and concentrate the strength of an enlightened Protestantism against the encroachments of Popery and Puseyism and to promote the interests of a Scriptural Christianity." Branches were organised in the USA (1867), Germany (1886-7) and other countries which all linked together in the World Evangelical Alliance. In 1946, using the occasion of the Centenary, the American National Association of Evangelicals promoted the revival of the movement which was in hibernation, and in 1951, the World Evangelical Fellowship was formed. See JB Kessler, Jr. *A Study of the Evangelical Alliance in Great Britain*; JW Ewing, *Goodly Fellowship: A Centenary Tribute to the Life and Work of the World Evangelical Alliance, 1846-1946* and David Howard, *The Dream that Will Not Die: An Account of the World Evangelical Fellowship*, Wheaton: WEF, 1988.

24. See Chapters 8, 9, 12 and 13.

ecumenical emphases.²⁵ Staff (mainly paid agents) of the financially high-powered international networks took the church on a never-ending course of parallel streams.

We already noted the developments in the training aspects of evangelistic ministries;²⁶ the role of colleges such as the South India Biblical Seminary and Union Biblical Seminary, which mainly provided training for the staff of parachurch ministries and indigenous missionary societies, the role of the denominational colleges that plant branches of (mainly American) new denominations in India, and the numerous short-term courses offered by many evangelical parachurch agencies to train the laity for evangelism.

Traditional and historic church colleges trained the ministry of the large churches, which were in constant link with ecumenical trends. Several studies helped evaluate them and make them effective. Major studies by the Lindsay Commission on *Christian Higher Education*, the Ranson Study on the *Christian Minister in India*, the Harrison Study *After Ten Years* on the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, the Priority Commission's National Study of Theological Education were considered in this book to trace the development of relevance in the field of theological education in India.²⁷

As recommended by the Lindsay, Ranson and Harrison reports, regional and vernacular theological education began to emerge in India in the sixties. The merger of the earlier denominational smaller colleges to form regional seminaries was possible, since already church union was obtained and further union negotiations were being promoted. The historic church colleges worked together under the guidance of the National Christian Council and its committee on theological education. They were identified as the ecumenical colleges. They were affiliated with and led by the Senate of Serampore College.²⁸ Leading among them was the United Theological College of Bangalore,²⁹ which trained most of the teachers for the other colleges and the leaders of the churches in India.

But the new denominational colleges that came to exist in the thirties and after remained separate, as evangelical colleges. Ranson proposed a structure to assist them, and in 1955 the Board of Theological Education was formed to bring coordination for these new colleges.³⁰ The principal

25. The author himself experienced this muffling and is aware of the party line taken by many.

26. See Chapters 12 and 13.

27. See Chapters 1, 11, and 14.

28. See Chapter 1.

29. See Chapter 1.

30. See Chapter 14.

of the many colleges rallied together under the leadership of the principal of the Union Biblical Seminary in the Board of Theological Education, which gave accreditation facility and strengthened their programmes.

By the early seventies, the evangelical colleges began to enter the Serampore family; Union Biblical Seminary in 1973, South India Biblical Seminary in 1976 and others such as Hindustan Bible Institute, Southern Asia Bible College, etc., in due course. Those of the conservative evangelicals who did not approve of this entry of evangelicals into what they thought was the liberal ecumenical orbit, chose to organise a separate Association of Evangelical Theological Education in India, in 1979.³¹ In this they were helped by the World Evangelical Fellowship's theological commission, which under the leadership of Bruce Nicholls was by then setting up an international accreditation agency for evangelical theological education. The Asia Theological Association under the leadership of Bong Rin Ro was part of this network, and the Association for Evangelical Theological Education in India became the Asia Theological Association's official organ in India. Interestingly, though AETEI continued to survive, some of its member colleges, such as the Allahabad Bible Seminary and Madras Bible Seminary of the American Oriental Missionary Society International (whose missionary Graham Houghton was president of AETEI), applied for and were granted affiliation with the Senate of Serampore College in the eighties.

The role of the Board of Theological Education, that of helping to coordinate the work of evangelical colleges and Bible Schools, hence became redundant, a duplication of what the Senate of Serampore College did with affiliated colleges. "Why two national structures?" became a question in the mid-seventies. A study from 1973 to 1983 led to the formation of the "One National Structure for Theological Education in India", namely, the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, growing through its several stages and culminating in 1983.³² This structure took keen interest in the indigenous growth of relevant theological education in its member colleges. It undertook a National Study of Theological Education in India³³ through its Commission on Priorities in Theological Education, a study which was carried out from 1978-1984 with the help of social scientists. They visited member colleges, interviewed and collected answers to their questionnaires from theological students, theological teachers, church leaders, women,

31. See Chapter 8.

32. See Chapter 14.

33. *Ibid.*

pastors, and pastors' wives, and studied theological curricula and systems and theological journals and made their reports to the BTESSC. The study became the most comprehensive study thus far.

The link with the Theological Education Fund,³⁴ earlier of the International Missionary Council and later of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, and the continued link with its successor the Programme on Theological Education, provided the BTESSC insight into worldwide developments in theological education. The journey into relevant theological education and relevant understanding of the task of mission for which theological education ought to train a ministry is an exciting and alive adventure on the Indian scene. We studied the above developments in the preceding chapters of this book.

We also noted that Christian mission, Christian ministry and theological education, though they address the world and its salvation as their ultimate goal, are for the church and are rooted in the church. In the Indian setting it becomes a question whether the above exciting journey of theological education and its experiments in relevance are truly rooted in the church. We took note of the Church of South India as an example and found it going through the very same struggle for relevance.³⁵ We noted the close link between the Church of South India and the BTESSC as the body which assisted it to train its ministry. Finally, we took one Church of South India ministerial training centre from within the Serampore family, the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary,³⁶ as an example to observe creative developments taking place in the Serampore family of colleges.

Thus through four decades of the post-Independence period, we took note of the development of the church's understanding of her mission in India, the changing image of ministry, the development of various ministries and structures of theology and ministry, and developments in the pursuit of relevant theological education in India. We illustrated these developments through concise studies of selected institutions and the church in India.

Observations and Comments

As we studied through four decades of developments in the mission of the church, ministry and theological education of the Indian church, we noted that there were several trends and tendencies that laid beneath the surface but had significant influence on the end result. They are subtle realities

34. See Appendix One.

35. See Chapter 15.

36. See Chapter 16.

which should be noted with a view to corrections and reinforcements whenever and wherever necessary. We list some of them which are of importance to the health of future developments in mission, ministry and theological education in India.

1. Christian leadership – the significance of South India
2. Theological innovation in India – the significance of the laity
3. Theological innovation in India – the significance of lay centres
4. Evangelistic ministries – the significance of parachurch ministries
5. Evangelicals and ecumenicals – an alien debate
6. Evangelism and social responsibility – an artificial debate
7. Evangelism or *preparatio evangelica*? – an authentic debate

1. Christian Leadership – the Significance of South India

The Numerical Significance of South Indian Responses to the Gospel

Response to the Christian gospel varied among the different races of India. Basically, India has the Dravidians in the South, hill tribes with Mongoloid features in the North East and the Aryans in the rest of India. Aryans were the original Hindus and they resisted the Christian gospel as well as any other religion that either rose from within India or came from outside. With its accommodative tolerance³⁷ and theological inclusivism, Hinduism did not allow much freedom or room for the separate identities of other religions. Thus when the Christian gospel arrived in various phases,³⁸ Hindu Aryan response remained poorer compared with

37. On the concept of Hindu tolerance, cf. S. Arles, "Hindu Response to Pluralism," *ERT*, 12:3, July 1988, pp. 196f; *IJT*, 30:1, January-March 1981, pp. 38f; P. Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality*, Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966; J. F. Seunarine, *Reconversion to Hinduism through Suddhi*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1977, p. 105.

38. The Church came to India at various times and under many names from the Middle Eastern places of its origin and the Western countries of its power. Power here is in terms of both historical and theological heritages, as well as economic affluence, which made possible the missionary expansion during [Latourette's] "Great Century". Economic affluence was often linked with the political, cultural and social aggression that accompanied colonial imperialism (as Stephen Neill indicates in his *History of Christian Missions*, Penguin Books, 1966). First, tradition places the church as arriving in A.D. 52 with the Apostle Thomas, followed by many from the Orthodox, Monophysite and Nestorian groups of Syria and Persia, leading to the many branches such as the Syrian Orthodox, Jacobite, Nestorian and later (after cross-fertilization with Reformation theology and practice), the Mar Thoma Churches. During and after the Age of Discovery, the Roman Catholic Church arrived and grew to be the largest single denomination of Christianity in India. From Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobili,

North Eastern and Southern responses. The comparatively larger spread of Islam in North India under Moghul influence furthered this resistance to the Christian gospel.

Dravidians responded better to the call of the Christian gospel. Primal religions predominated in their past. Later they mixed with South Indian versions of deity.³⁹ Dravidian religious culture was slowly infiltrated by Hindu conceptions through the centuries before and after Christ. Dominant other forms of religion and culture came to South India; Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism before Christ, Christianity in the first century A.D. and Islam in the sixth century A.D. with the commercial expansion of Islamic people from the Middle East into Indian Ocean countries. The Mappilla Muslim community in Kerala illustrates the type of long-standing Islamic presence in India which was enhanced in other parts of India during the Moghul empire.⁴⁰

and Joseph Beschi on to Mother Teresa, Catholic missions spread piety accompanied with education and social services. The German Lutherans Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau arrived with the Danish Mission in 1706, followed by English Baptist William Carey in 1792, Scottish Presbyterian Alexander Duff in 1830, the Methodists, the Anglicans of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Church Missionary Society. Thus the Protestant versions of Christianity were planted in India from the eighteenth century. C. B. Firth gives an account of this tradition in his *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, Madras: CLS for SSC-CSL, No. 23, 1983, chapters 1-2. Firth provides comparative references to other works. On the reformation influence of CMS Anglican missionaries and the cultural reformatory setting in Kerala, see Firth, *ibid.*, pp. 165-180; Neill, *op. cit.* and M. M. Thomas' Abraham Malpan Lectures *Towards an Evangelical Social Gospel*, Madras: CLS, 1977, pp. 1-13. See also G. M. Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India, A.D. 52-1542*, Bombay: Manaktalas, 1965; J. Richter (translated by S. H. Moore), *A History of Missions in India*, London: Oliphants, 1908; P. Thomas, *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1954; M. A. Sherring, *A History of Protestant Missions in India, 1706-1881*, R. T. S., 1884; J. Sandegren, *From Tranquebar to Serampore*, Serampore, 1955; E. A. Lehmann, *It Began at Tranquebar*, Madras: CLS, 1956; E. Chatterton, *A History of the Church of England in India*, London: SPCK, 1924. The historical and large Protestant churches established themselves in nineteenth century India often utilizing the power and prestige accessible to Christian missions due to the steady expansion of the colonial empire. By the end of that century they were faced with demands for the unity and indigeneity of the church.

39. See Wilber Theodore Elmore, *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism: A Study of the Local and Village Deities of South India*, Madras: CLS for India, 1925.

40. For information on Muslim groups in South India, see W. Preston Warren, "Islam in Southern India," *The Muslim World* XXI, 1931, pp. 352-367; and for

The essentially primal religious background, lacking a strong commitment to Hinduism on the part of the low, backward and no caste people, contributed to the large-scale response to the gospel. A thirst for liberation assisted in the overthrow of Brahminical domination, unlike in the North. The Christian faith came in strides and grew steadily among the Dravidians. A third of the people of what is now known as Kerala state are Christian. They belong to the old Syrian Orthodox Church and its reformed variety in the Mar Thoma Church, along with those who entered into the Catholic, Congregational, Anglican, Lutheran and Pentecostal branches of the church. The Roman Catholic Church grew all over South India, and it remains the largest single unit within Indian Christianity.⁴¹ Lutherans grew in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh; Baptists in Andhra and to a smaller extent elsewhere; Wesleyans in Andhra and Karnataka; Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists and other independent groups in Tamilnadu, Andhra and Karnataka. Every one of these groups grew to a larger extent in the four Southern States than in the Northern States.

As a result, 60% of what is known as Indian Christianity is found among the four South Indian States of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. That is approximately 15 million Christians in a South Indian population of about 240 millions. This compares with 12% of Indian Christianity in the North Eastern States (approximately 3 million Christians among the North Eastern hill tribes)⁴² and the 28% of Indian Christianity

information on recent Islam in India, see Dwight Baker, "Accessions to Islam in India," *The Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute*, IX:1-2, January-June 1986, pp. 1-20.

41. For an account of the Roman Catholic Church in India, see T. Pothacamury, *The Church in Independent India*, Maryknoll: World Horizon Report No. 22, 1958; and John G Arakkal, MV Cyriac and Abraham Koothottil, "Alienation or Liberation? Toward an Evaluation of the History of Christianity in India," *Jeevadhara*, VII:37, January-February 1977, pp. 17-85.

42. See F. S. Downs' "Appendix: Christianity in North East India" in CB Firth, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-290, for details on the growth and significance of the church in North East India. Cf. T Menampampil, *Church in North-East India: A Study*, 1974, Guahati: Provincial Office, Society of Don Bosco, 1974; FS Downs, *The Mighty Works of God: A Brief History of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India, The Mission Period 1836-1950*, Guahati: Christian Literature Centre, 1971; E Chapman and M Clark, *Mizo Miracle* (Mizo Baptists), Madras: CLS, 1968; JM Lloyd, *On Every High Hill* (Mizo Presbyterians), Liverpool: Foreign Mission Office, 1955; H Anderson, *Among the Lushais*, London: Carry Press, 1914; JH Morris, *The Story of our Foreign Missions* (Welsh Presbyterians in Mizo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills), Liverpool: Hugh Evans and Sons Ltd., 1930; S

in the heavily populated North, West, East and Central India (less than 7 million; a Christian presence of 6.25% in South India, 5% in North East and 1.4% in North India).

The church in the North East had neither the time nor the resources of local literary culture to develop the kind of maturity, theological independence and indigenous authenticity seen in the church in the South. The few theological schools and colleges in the North East were not adequate to train the ministry needed in the fast growing churches. As a result, most of the candidates went to colleges and seminaries in the South and North. Youth of the church in the North East responded to serve the church in great numbers, but found that admission was not easy either in the mainland or within the North Eastern Colleges (such as the Aizawl Theological College (Aizawl, Mizoram), Eastern Theological College (Jorhat, Assam), Cherra Theological College (Cherrapunji, Meghalaya), Clark Theological College (Mokokchung, Nagaland), Trulock Theological Seminary (Imphal, Manipur), etc.⁴³ Distance, defective postal facilities in the remote hills and lack of academic excellence were the hurdles they had to circumvent. Often students arrived at reopening time at the gates of the South Indian seminaries to plead for admission.⁴⁴ This proved the significance of South Indian theological institutions like the United Theological College, Southern Asia Bible College, Southern Asia Christian College, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, South India Biblical Seminary, Hindustan Bible Institute and Berean Baptist Bible College, which all offered English-medium training. Union Biblical Seminary in Central India, Calcutta Bible College in the East and Allahabad Bible Seminary in the North also offered similar English-medium training, and attracted students from the North East.

North Indian students either trained at Serampore College, Bishops College, Leonard Theological College or at the regional seminaries such

Chaube, *Hill Politics in North-East India*, Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1973; MM Thomas and RW Taylor (eds.), *Tribal Awakening*, Madras: CLS for CISRS, 1965.

43. For information on these colleges, see Henry S Wilson, *Directory of Theological Schools in South Asia*, Bangalore: BTESSC, 1986.

44. The author recalls his own experience of this situation during the years 1977-82, 86-88, when as the registrar in-charge of admissions and later as vice-principal and principal of the South India Biblical Seminary, he dealt with such students who arrived after over five or more days of travel without having applied earlier. At times, young girls arrived accompanied by an elder or relative from their church, and went from one college to the next searching for admission. For example, the cases of Wilson Walling Ao, Moakala and numerous others.

as the Gujarat United School of Theology, Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Theological College, Santal Evangelical Lutheran Theological College, North India United Theological College and such others. But many went South, particularly those who qualified for post-graduate degrees, until the end of the seventies. By the same token many South Indian candidates went to the Northern and Central Indian colleges, not because of a lack of colleges in the South, but either because they could not obtain admission or they preferred the theological orientation of a college in the North and Central India. For example, evangelicals from all the Southern States chose to train at Union Biblical Seminary on theological grounds.

Centres of Theology and Theological Education in South India

Already in 1910, with the formation of the United Theological College, the centre of gravity for Indian Christian theology and ministerial training moved southward to the very centre of South India, to Bangalore. The United Theological College benefited from the investments of the many missions and developed a post-graduate study programme, a well equipped library with specialised archival collections,⁴⁵ a language school for missionaries⁴⁶ and the YMCA training programme,⁴⁷ all of which made UTC significant. As church union negotiations progressed, UTC played a vital role as an authentic venture and example of united existence.

The setting up by the National Christian Council of its Christian Institute for the Study of Society and Committee for Literature on Social Concern at Bangalore under the directorship of P.D. Devanandan, which later merged into the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in 1957; the Urban Industrial and Rural Mission in connection with the Industrial Team Service of the St. Marks's Cathedral in Bangalore; the development of the Student Christian Movement with its headquarters and conference centre; and the venture of the Ecumenical Christian Centre on the outskirts of Bangalore all made the city of Bangalore significant for ecumenical theology in India,⁴⁸ in turn affecting theological

45. The United Theological College has developed an excellent archival collection on the history of Christianity and Christian theology in India, and has copies of the major microfiche collections of Western mission boards that worked in India and their records and reports.

46. See Harold Vande Berg, "The Relation of the Missionary Language School to the Theological College," in *Fifty Years of Service: 1910-1960*, Bangalore: UTC Golden Jubilee Volume, 1960, pp. 65-68.

47. See JH Dunderdale, "The Y.M.C.A. Training School," in *Fifty Years of Services: 1910-1960*, Bangalore: UTC Golden Jubilee Volume, 1960, pp. 57-64.

48. Bangalore is considered the Geneva of India because of the presence of so many ecumenical agencies and structures of theology.

education. The presence of many evangelical groups and seminaries, such as the Southern Asia Bible College, South India Biblical Seminary, South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Berean Baptist Bible College, Asian Christian Academy, Evangelical Theological Seminary and the Association for Theological Education by Extension in and around Bangalore made the city significant also for evangelical theology.⁴⁹ Post-graduate and research studies under the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College were coordinated by its director based at Bangalore. Elsewhere we mentioned the presence of non-theological parachurch ministries that are located at Bangalore. With its better climatic conditions, Bangalore drew numerous Christian agencies to function from headquarters set there, and hence Bangalore developed into a sort of Christian theological capital for India.⁵⁰

The presence of the Madras Christian College, Christian Literature Society and the British government for Madras Presidency, made Madras equally important at the turn of the century. Later, the setting up of the Church of South India with its headquarters and synod offices, and the location of the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute added to the importance of Madras. Madurai excelled in developing what we noted already as the best experimentation in contextually relevant theological education, and thus had an effect on national developments in theological education. Mangalore, Secunderabad and Trivandrum each housed regional seminaries of importance, and Kottayam the denominational seminaries of the Orthodox and Mar Thoma Churches.

The Significance of Bangalore and Serampore for Theological Education

There was a question whether the United Theological College should be based at Bangalore or at Tambaram within the Madras Christian College. Finally, the offer of a campus by the London Missionary Society took it to Bangalore. Again, there was a question as to the relation between United Theological College and Serampore College. The Decennial Missionary Conference of 1902 at Madras had discussed the matter of establishing a faculty of theology and decided in favour of utilizing the Serampore charter on university lines.⁵¹ Serampore College, which was

49. Bangalore is also considered the Wheaton of India, again because of the presence of so many evangelical institutions, agencies and ministries.

50. Bangalore also is referred to as the Vatican of India, since there are important Roman Catholic institutions located there. Hence from ecumenical, evangelical and Catholic angles, Bangalore is central for theology.

51. See George Howells, *The Story of Serampore and Its College*, Serampore, 1927, p. 65; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 30f, 36f, 72. Cf. W. Stewart (ed.), *The Story of Serampore*

started in 1818, had its charter issued by the Danish Emperor Frederick in the year 1827, which was renewed and adopted for higher theological education under the leadership of George Howells. As a result of negotiations with Baptist Missionary Society and the government, the higher theological department preparing candidates for the B.D. degrees was started in 1910, the first B.D. degrees were conferred in 1915, the Licentiate in Theology Diploma was instituted in 1916 and the reorganization process completed and an interdenominational senate formed in 1918. Colleges began to be affiliated with Serampore. Along with Bishops College, Leonard Theological College, and others, United Theological College also got itself affiliated with the Serampore University in 1919, and benefited from the academic authority and unity that such an affiliation provided. The Board of Theological Education developed under the National Christian Council of India in 1955 paved the way for accrediting and assisting smaller (particularly evangelical) colleges which did not belong to the Serampore family of colleges. Later, when such colleges began to enter the Serampore family in the seventies through affiliation, the Board of Theological Education became a part of the Senate of Serampore College, forming the one national structure for theological education. This we have already discussed in detail. Thus Serampore held a central place of importance for theological education in India, though the large majority of students and teachers and leadership, both theological and administrative, came from the South, emerging from southern Christianity. Most teachers for Serampore family of colleges studied at Bangalore, as United Theological College remained the place for higher English-medium post-graduate work, with its research facilities.

South India Led the Way for Indian Christian Missions

Though the *swadeshi* tendency at the turn of the century led to the formation of the National Missionary Society, and the very formation was in the premises of the Serampore College in 1905, the movement has stayed strong in the South with its headquarters in Madras. Its general secretaries and missionaries were often drawn from the churches in the South. The India Missionary Society of Tinnevely and the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association were both older than the National Missionary Society, and were totally South Indian in origin, resources and personnel. As noted earlier, when there rose an impulse for indigenous missionary societies during and after the fifties, missionary movements such as the

and its College, Calcutta: Senate of Serampore College, pp. 46f. The B.D. curriculum was set in line with the best theological colleges in the West, but specially adapted to Indian needs.

Friends Missionary Prayer Band, Kashmir Evangelical Fellowship, Indian Evangelical Mission and many others were born.⁵² A very large proportion of them are South Indian in origin and in leadership. To challenge and send missionaries from the South Indian Christians to specifically unreached areas in the North Indian regions has been the motto of several of these societies. We already noted that there was a heavy slant of these on tribal outreach,⁵³ to the neglect of work within the towns and cities where the educated Indian population lives. The Malayalees of Kerala and the Tamils of Tamilnadu claim to be the first and second groups to receive the gospel. They take their role in Christian mission work seriously and contribute the highest percentage of workers in the mission field as well as in organizational work for missions. The two communities virtually dominated the church in India in all aspects of her life and work. They also accounted for the highest number of theological teachers and theologians, and as such led the ministerial formation in the country. Their passionate service aroused the church in the North and North East to rise to their own role in the experiencing and sharing of the gospel. If the planting of the church in the North and North East of India is credited to the work of Western missionaries, then the credit for continued mission work, training of ministry and development of indigenous theological leadership, goes to the leadership of South Indian Christians.

2. Theological Innovation in India – the Significance of the Laity

Whether it be the mission of the church or the ministry of the church that one is involved in, all that one does and understands as the task

52. See Chapter 9. Cf. Hedlund and Hrangkhuma (eds.) *Indigenous Missions of India*, Madras: Church Growth Research Centre, 1980.

53. This preoccupation with the tribals is referred to in different sections of this book. This preoccupation could be because of several factors. Tribals are adherents of primal religions and hence are more approachable than the Hindus or Muslims, whose organised and well-developed religions hinder their response; tribals are in primitive living conditions where the modern civilization of the Christian has an appeal to them; tribals are in this sense inferior to the Christian community in India and hence Christians are able to give the gospel from the vantage point of superiority. But before the rest of India, most low and no-caste convert Christians are held as inferior by the Hindus, and the Muslims within their egalitarian society are economically better off as richer than the predominantly poorer people in the Christian church. Hence, from an inferiority complex, Christian missions avoid reaching out to the Hindu and Muslim majorities. They go to the tribals in the hills and jungles as their first priority, then to the villages. Towns and cities are the most neglected in terms of missionary outreach and evangelism.

depends on the types of theological presuppositions one is committed to. Since much theological understanding was imparted by Western missionaries who were themselves shaped by their own backgrounds, so a great deal of the theology and theological presuppositions in the Indian church remained alien to Indian thought and life. It still remains so in certain circles. But the need to rethink theology contextually and the desire to do theology in the Indian setting dawned on various individuals who ventured into explorations into what later became identified as Indian Christian theology.

Those who ventured to break new ground in theology often found themselves questioning age-old traditions and dogmas. They were at times disowned and disciplined by the hierarchy, and other times they innovated new patterns of ministry and developed suitable theologies. For example, Sadhu Sundar Singh left St. Andrews Seminary of Lahore and became a sadhu in saffron robe, wandering to share the gospel in the remote Tibetan hills. He also visited organised Indian Christian settings such as the Maramon Convention. He pursued indigenous patterns to offer "the Gospel in an Indian cup."⁵⁴ Ramabai rejected many of the Western patterns of operation and developed her own mission with a contextual relevance. She is an outstanding example of liberation and innovation for contemporary Christians.⁵⁵ We took note of the attempts of Kaj Baago, Robin Boyd and MM Thomas to study the pioneers of such indigenous Christianity and Indian Christian theology.⁵⁶

It is of great significance to note here that the ventures in theological

54. Sadhu Sundar Singh was one of the pioneers among Protestants in India to venture into indigenous Christianity. His use of Indian lifestyle, Indian metaphors and Indian spiritual resources for Christian understanding were a great attraction to all. See Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS, 1969 and 1975 for an account of Sundar Singh's contributions.

55. When Pandita Ramabai tried to understand Christian faith from her Hindu background and would not yield to what she thought were the priestly manipulations in the Christian church similar to her Hindu experiences in her past, she was reprimanded by her mentors. Her *Letters and Correspondences* indicate this. See Nalini Arles' discussion of this in her thesis, "Pandita Ramabai and Amy Carmichael: A Comparative Study of their Contribution to the Transformation of the Position of Indian Women," M.Th. Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1986.

56. Kaj Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: CLS for CISRS; Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Madras: CLS and MM Thomas' *Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, London: SCM, all published in 1969 are the major resources for an insight into these attempts at indigenous theology in India.

pioneering, more often than credited, were led by two categories of people, the Christian laity and fresh converts from other faiths, rather than by theological graduates or second and third generation Christians. Theological graduates appear to have settled into the traditions of the fathers, became men of the "status quo," disciplined to carry the existing order forward. They settled into the administrative and traditional roles which leave no time for creative thinking. Second and third generation Christians do not feel the same level of vibrancy about their Christian experience as their parents or grandparents did. They, as Stephen Neill observed from the Indian setting, have grown accustomed to the benefits of being Christians and rather make Christianity the milch-cow.⁵⁷ But fresh converts who have paid the price of conversion when their whole family and clan turned against them, were not keen to settle for irrelevant ways or understandings. A whole series of such fresh converts pioneered indigenous Christian theology for India. We noted Sundar Singh and Pandita Ramabai. We should add H.A. Krishna Pillai, Nehemiah Goreh, Narayan Vaman Tilak, Chenchiah, Chakkarai and a host of others.

In post-Independence India, numerous laymen were articulate theologians whose contributions have strengthened Indian Christianity and Indian Christian theology. The leading among them, Madathilparambil Mammen Thomas, had great significance in the shaping of the theological relevance of the church in India to the secular, religious and social context, as we considered already. Rajaiah D. Paul, D.A. Thangasamy, David G. Moses, E.V. Mathew, G.R. Karat, Ninan Koshy, Chandran Devanesan, Paul Siromani, Alexander Devasundaram, T.K. Thomas, Mathai Zachariah and numerous others participated in the theological task as laymen.

3. Theological Innovation in India - the Significance of Lay Centres

Pioneering into indigenous theological formation also was promoted more by institutes and centres, which were not essentially theological teaching institutes. Theological colleges and Bible seminaries were under severe pressure to cover a vast amount of material and the various aspects of theological and biblical teaching, with extensive curricula. As rote learning, content learning and reception of knowledge were the preoccupation, innovative thinking was left by them on the fringes. Even where contemporary social issues were discussed, this was done within the confines of a course syllabus in preparation for examination. Once

57. Rajaiah D Paul quotes Stephen Neill to illustrate how the status improvement from the convert to his sons, grandsons and great grandsons was of an increasing proportion. See his *The Cross Over India*, London: SCM, 1952.

the course was over, one entered into the field of ministry, where the practical chores demanded all the attention one could give. But places and structures not primarily designed for teaching, such as the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, the Ecumenical Christian Centre, the Christian Retreat and Study Centre, Urban Industrial Rural Mission, etc., became centres to articulate contemporary theology. They related Biblical faith to the social, cultural, economic, political and religious environment within which the Christian faith had to be exercised. Educated lay Christians, particularly college professors, lawyers, social workers and economists, took a keen interest in relating faith to the contemporary social order, under the influence, encouragement and facilities provided by such theological research and study centres. The ecumenical movement recognised the importance of such study centres and promoted them under the renewal sub-unit of the World Council of Churches,⁵⁸ while yet promoting renewal within theological colleges through the Programme on Theological Education.

Hence indigenous Christian theology was not the monopoly of Christian theological colleges. Other centres and institutes contributed much more to its development in India. G.R. Karat, after serving the Student Christian Movement as national general secretary, attested of one such, the CISRS, that "there are few things in India as significant as the CISRS for the life and work of the Church in India."⁵⁹ This was also duly recognised by the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College. It was not only comprised of the theological colleges and Biblical seminaries, but included those non-teaching centres⁶⁰ which were developing grassroots-level theological reinterpretations by their involvement in real social situations where the common man faced challenges to the practice of his faith and its commitments.

4. Evangelistic Ministries – the Significance of Parachurch Ministries

Theological colleges were predominantly preparing candidates for ordained ministry. Bible seminaries went further and prepared the various

58. See Stanley Samartha, "Christian Study Centres and Asian Churches," *IRM*, LIX:234, April 1970, pp. 173–179. See the newsletters sent by the renewal subunit by its director Toshi Arai from Geneva.

59. GR Karat, "One Man's Thoughts on the CISRS," *NCCR*, LXXXIX, August 1969, pp. 257f.

60. Non-teaching centres included the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Ecumenical Christian Centre, Urban Industrial Rural Mission, Inter Church Service Agency, Student Christian Movement, Association of Theologically Trained Women of India, Association of Theological Teachers in India, Christian Counselling Centre, etc.

types of paid workers for church and parachurch ministries. Already here one notes a widening of the concept of "ministry." Whether a pastor or a parachurch worker, a person who serves in the name of God in India, a religious *guru* who is venerable. The Indian setting thrives on religiosity, religious men, piety and *guru-bhakti*.⁶¹ Hindu attitudes of *guru-bhakti* are transposed into the Christian community, and full-time Christian workers are held in high esteem. They are the learned, experienced, liberated souls who have attained spirituality and its fruits. The sanction of a holy order precludes the laity as the ordinary who are not the "holy." This works against the development of all laity into priesthood. Here the religious culture of India hinders the development of lay leaders and lay theologians. Christian workers, instead of resisting the halo put around their heads, fall a prey to the advantages of retaining the venerable status. Rather than equipping the laity to do their own theological thinking, Christian workers tend to do the thinking and portray themselves as problem-solvers. They provide spiritual answers to every problem and keep the laity dependent on them. Offerings of gold and commodities besides currency notes and cheques provide several such independent evangelists and parachurch leaders, even in India, with Hollywood glamour.⁶² This proves damaging to the autonomous development of lay Christians, who tend to get tossed by every wind of doctrine or spiritual experience that is glamorously presented.

In wider India, democracy and the increase of literacy aroused a widespread awareness of the rights of the individual. Secular forces motivated people to fight for their rights. Political parties such as B.R. Ambedkar's Republican Party of India worked with the principle "Educate, Organise and Agitate" to bring about social change for Dalits.⁶³ Within the Christian church also there was a tendency to bring social awareness

61. The popular attitude of *guru-bhakti* is the "devotion and loyalty of a disciple to his master."

62. Examples could be cited here of some of the popular evangelists in India whose lifestyle and glamorous publications imitate those of the television evangelists of America; DGS Dhinakaran, a bank manager turned evangelist-healer; Akbar Haqq, an associate of Billy Graham; etc.

63. See C Bharill, *Social and Political Ideas of B. R. Ambedkar*, Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 1977. The Republican Party was strong in the author's hometown, where he grew up familiar with their ideology. Dalit Sahitya Academy in Bangalore publishes its *Dalit Voice* and promotes the cause of the Dalits. Its editor, V. Rajashekar Shetty, had been a resource person at various Christian gatherings to bring awareness to Christian concern for the Dalits. His *Dalit Movement in Karnataka* was published by CISRS in 1978. Cf. John Malielal, *Caste in India Today*, Bangalore: CSA Publications, 1980.

and to arouse Christian participation in the fight for their rights. Whereas this was promoted in ecumenical circles, evangelicals often looked on such social awareness and political participation with disfavour. They tended to promote the tradition of *guru-bhakti* and prayer meetings, Bible studies and revival preachings. Whereas an evangelical layman might testify, preach and lead a Bible study, he was likely to be socially and politically illiterate and not about to consider it his Christian duty to participate in national and local politics. M. Azariah, later bishop of Madras, referred to this sort of piety as widespread in Madras among independent evangelical groups.⁶⁴ The same mentality entered the church scene, and discredited the development of lay initiative in theology.

As we considered already, during the fifties and sixties numerous parachurch ministries and mission societies were developed both from external influence and indigenous leadership. Most of these were lay Christian movements which provided much-needed avenues for the piety of the laity to find evangelistic expression, encouraging participation in prayer meetings, Bible studies, retreats, conferences, open air evangelistic preaching, sacrificial giving, and the sending of indigenous missionaries. The Union of Evangelical Students of India and Friends Missionary Prayer Band represent such avenues for lay people to exercise their faith and leadership and to obtain a sense of fulfilment. They paved the way for active evangelistic leadership which made hundreds of well-educated Christians into what could be described as "tent making" ministers, self employed and giving themselves to evangelism and Christian missions.

In these circles theologising was left to the professionals; interest in theologising was considered less spiritual; the popular view was that what is needed is revival and not theology. Though several young men and women were motivated by such lay movements to enter into theological education and full-time Christian ministry, and some to become theological educators, the emphasis was on practical and down-to-earth evangelism and Bible teaching. They recognised the need for few to do theology, but mostly for apologetic purposes. The lack of emphasis on indigenous theological development in the Union of Evangelical Students of India could be illustrated by one fact, the discontinuation of the work of the Evangelical Theological Students Fellowship of India.⁶⁵

64. See M Azariah, *Witnessing in India Today*, Madras: Diocesan Press for UELCI, 1983, pp. 48f.

65. With the combined efforts of the associate staff worker VM Kattapuram and general secretary PT Chandapilla of UESI, the concern for sharp evangelical

Attempts were made by evangelicals to arouse lay participation in theologising. But those attempts were short-lived and ineffective. For instance, the Evangelical Fellowship of India attempted to form its Evangelical Theological Commission with lay theologians in the sixties, but the programme did not survive even for a decade. Similarly, the attempts of the Evangelical Theological Society in the seventies was short-lived. It co-sponsored a theological journal with the Theological Research and Communication Institute of Delhi, but soon dissolved itself as it could not secure sufficient interest among evangelical laymen.⁶⁶ TRACI itself had a decade of active life, but went into hibernation due to lack of leadership.⁶⁷ A few individuals, such as Vishal Mangalwadi, attempted a socio-religious relevance in their evangelical theologising. Within the short span of a decade, Mangalwadi moved from student ministry with Union of Evangelical Students of India, to research and writing on modern Hindu gurus, to developmental involvement with rural oppressed masses, which ultimately led him into political participation to contest a Parliamentary election. He became a lone voice on evangelical political involvement.⁶⁸ But the wider evangelical community disowned

theological thinking among those from the Evangelical Union who went to study in theological colleges led to the formation of ETSF towards the end of the sixties. The author took over the leadership between 1977–82. When he left the country for studies, UESI did not appoint a successor to continue the work of ETSF, partly since the new lay leadership did not find sufficient motivation to encourage theological students.

66. Between the years 1978–80, the author was a member of the ETS and attended the meeting in Bangalore when it was dissolved. Whereas men and women flocked to conferences on mission and evangelism, ETS could not get its members to come together for meetings, and so was unable to function during this period. Hence the sad end. It reveals the low priority given to the task of theology by Evangelicals in India.

67. Bruce Nicholls, Basil Scott and David Householder, all expatriate missionaries, were leading the TRACI group. For short periods Indians were involved in directing the work, but they lacked long-range leadership. Hence the publication of the journal suffered, and the work suffered after the mid-eighties.

68. See Vishal Mangalwadi's *The World of Gurus*, a TRACI book from Delhi, in which he described select popular Hindu gurus in India; *Truth and Social Reform*, Delhi: Nivedit Good Books, 1986. The back cover of the book has this to say of itself: "In this explosive book the author applies the radical power of truth to transform society, to one of India's greatest social problems – poverty. Once in a while the church hears a prophetic message. When it does it is never the same again. This book has the potential of becoming a landmark in changing the identity and agenda of the Indian Church." His enthusiastic work was reviewed as lacking scholarship by Richard Taylor in *Religion and Society*.

such trends an "liberalism."⁶⁹ There were many who spoke theoretically of political involvement, but from a safe distance of non-involvement. Hence, evangelical indigenous theologising activity remained dormant. Any thinking done among evangelicals was confined either to "evangelization" or "relief and developmental aid."⁷⁰ Hence we find that the indigenous theological pioneering in India remains predominantly an ecumenical Christian activity.⁷¹

5. The Evangelicals and the Ecumenicals – an Alien Debate

We noted the artificial rivalry between evangelicals and ecumenicals that has been hurting the church in India. It at times takes the shape of the debate between evangelism and social action or social responsibility. This debate is not essentially innate to the Indian Christian setting. It is rather an alien dichotomy that is superimposed on the Christian community in India. We noted growth within the Indian church's understanding of her mission as exemplified in the Church of South India. It was to insist on evangelism while channeling it into contemporary avenues.

Earlier, when the CSI was formed, the rationale for the unity was "effective mission and evangelisation." Later the understanding of the mission and evangelisation grew in accordance with the Indian setting. In the seventies and eighties through its "Church and Social Justice" emphasis and the "Programme for Conscientising Rural Masses" within

69. In 1983, when the author met with him during the Wheaton '83 conference, he expressed his disappointment that evangelical leaders in India did not give him the support that he needed for his political and social involvements.

70. Most writings of evangelicals in India are of the devotional variety, and reports of meetings and conferences. Often papers written for seminars are published in journals and collected into volumes later, such as Ben Wati's *Whither Evangelicals?* Only in the seventies and eighties some books were written such as Sunand Sumithra's doctoral thesis on MM Thomas' theology of missions, *Revolution as Revelation* (unfortunately used more for divisive commenting rather than bridging the gap). Vishal Mangalwadi's works are referred to above. Vinay Samuel, Saphir Athyal and Emmanuel James have contributed articles.

71. Among the ecumenicals a spirit of holding together and promoting one another is seen in various ways. One important element in this is the way individuals who contributed the most are recognised with a collection of essays written in their honour. We have referred to books written in honour of JR Chandran, MM Thomas, MA Thomas, AD Manuel, Stanley Samartha, Samuel Amirtham, and many more. But such a spirit is absent among the evangelicals. One notes often a competitive rivalry that hurts their unity, that there are no such volumes to commemorate the contributions of evangelical leaders.

its "Priorities for the Mission of the Church," the Church of South India enhanced the evangelistic missionary commitment with social relevance.⁷² When it linked with the Church of North India and the Mar Thoma Church in a joint council considering the feasibility of uniting into the Church of India, the three churches were constrained about the social issues facing the nation and the churches; and felt an urgency about their social mission. Their commission on national issues addressed the many social and political issues facing the nation, such as poverty, oppression of the weaker sections of the society on caste, sex and race grounds, corruption and the decline of moral values at every level of the nation and even within the churches and church institutions.

The joint council called upon Christians and all people to denounce corruption, discrimination on the grounds of religion, caste, sex or race, particularly the dowry system and exploitation of women, and to stand in solidarity with the poor, the oppressed, and the exploited in their sufferings and in struggles for human dignity, social injustice and a better life.⁷³

The plea to the Christian population was to practise the highest moral standards and thus to contribute to the achievement of the socio-economic goals of the nation. Here was the emphasis in contemporary witness and mission of the church. The joint council hence planned three new commissions for theology, mission and justice and peace. This is revealing in terms of where the church was going in her understanding of mission in India. Unity for the sake of mission could still be the theme, with modifications of what that mission was all about in the changing Indian scene. This view was reflected on the national level through the National Christian Council. To be evangelical and ecumenical at the same time was not only promoted but insisted upon as innate to the nature of Christian discipleship. To divide the two was condemned by men such as Russell Chandran as a Western, particularly North American, hoax played upon the church universal by men of theological naivete. JR Chandran found his biblical basis for the evangelical gospel and its ecumenical width in the Pauline epistle to the Ephesians, and condemned the middle walls as remains of the imperial past.

The togetherness of evangelical and ecumenical emphases in the ecumenical leader MM Thomas was attested by the title of the collection of his Abraham Malpan Memorial Lectures of 1977 at the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam, *Towards an Evangelical Social*

72. See Chapter 15.

73. See the news item "Praising God for the Prospect of a United Church in India," *Madras Diocesan News and Notes*, 17:2, February 1983, pp. 52f.

Gospel.⁷⁴ Many missionaries who worked in India, such as Neill, Ranson, Newbigin and a host of others, developed this holistic approach. William Stewart of Serampore College, also in his Abraham Malpan Memorial Lectures, spoke of this evangelical-ecumenical divide as "unnecessary...untrue...and preposterous."⁷⁵ Donald Kennedy, bishop of CNI, Bombay Diocese, sought "a theology of mission which would be 'adjectivally ecumenical but substantially evangelical'...with the idea of an ecumenical evangelism."⁷⁶ It was also a strength of the approach of E. Stanley Jones to combine the two emphases.⁷⁷

6. Evangelism and Social Responsibility – an Artificial Debate

The above division between evangelical and ecumenical emphases found expression more often in the puzzling question of the priority and primacy of evangelism over social responsibility. Jesus' words that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached first is right to emphasise, while noting the implications of his parables of the good Samaritan and the final judgement.⁷⁸ If what one does to his neighbour is of equal importance to one's love for God, then there is much room to interpret evangelism in terms of activities of mercy. Whereas ecumenical social consciousness found impetus for this balance between evangelism and social responsibility in the prophets, post-Lausanne evangelicals found themselves using matrimonial imagery to wed evangelism and social responsibility as equal partners. It is a subtle allegory, as "equal" is left without precise meaning. Is woman equal to man? Is woman to enter the ordained ministry? Is subordination and helper a two-way traffic? Many evangelicals would confuse the issue by answering "yea" to some of these questions and "nay" to others, depending on their denominational background, and can find biblical backing for their arguments.

To the genuinely Indian Christian this is no matter for debate. He recognises the urgency of evangelism on the one hand, as the majority

74. Madras: CLS, 1977, pp. 39.

75. William Stewart, *The Mission of the Church in a Plural World*, Madras: CLS, 1982, pp. 35f.

76. Donald Kennedy, *Light from Any Quarter? Ecumenical-Evangelical Studies* in World Christian Mission, Belfast: Ulster Services, 1982, pp. 54-61.

77. Jones' works reveal this unity. Particularly his *Ascent of Praise*, in which he talks of the unity of the church illustrating that one church alone cannot put out enough light to dispel darkness, but a combination of all the light of all the churches can produce enough light to guide humanity through the darkness of this world order.

78. Luke 10:25-37; Mathew, 25:31-46.

hardly anything done for such compared to the much done for the totally alien "other sheep." A biblical paradigm should demand the setting of the house in order first for effective testimony. The Indian church ship is adrift on the ocean of litigation while the indigenous mission boats are after a fresh catch. Will each boat grow into a church? Will there be a credible church to identify? Why did Jesus say "I will build my church" instead of "my churches"?

The rush of evangelistic campaigns does not necessarily reflect the God of the Bible, who operates patiently with a different time scale, a thousand years appear as a day to him! The rushing about in evangelism to gain quick conversions could be delayed to allow time for a proper preparation of the people for the gospel, as Carr and his colleagues would express it. To identify with the poor, their problems and pains, to theologise from their experiences, to fight for their cause and thus to win them to the compassionate-incarnate Christ, to speak justice to the rich and to challenge them, to influence the political and social powers that ultimately control the masses, are part of the macrolevel concern in mission in India. This has to go on forever as the world order continues with the rich becoming richer and the poor always poorer.

Rethinking of mission, ministry and theological education for relevance, and a preparation of the people for the gospel, are both ongoing tasks for the church. It will only end when the Lord of the harvest shall return. Until then, the church in India shall continue her pursuit after relevance in mission, ministry and theological education.

In Conclusion

In 1930, the Lindsay Commission observed that

If one considers the state of theological education as a whole one is impressed by its elementary character, its denominational character, and its isolation from the general trend of academic education.⁸³

Fifty years later, by 1980, theological education in India appeared very different. More denominational colleges were opened in the thirties and later. The Ranson report of the mid-forties proposed vernacular and regional cooperative colleges, and a coordinating structure for the new Bible schools. By the time of the Harrison study, *After Ten Years*, the Board of Theological Education was formed to coordinate the new colleges, and both regional cooperation and vernacular theological

⁸³. See the Lindsay Commission Report on *Christian Higher Education in India*, London: Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931, p. 237. This was already discussed in Chapter 1.

education were beginning to develop. Church union in the Church of South India furthered the drive for cooperation. By the sixties denominational colleges had come under regional and national ecumenical relationships. Regional vernacular colleges as proposed by Ranson are a reality now in all South Indian states and in some parts of North India. Post-graduate education up to doctoral and post-doctoral level is developed in select colleges of the Serampore family.

The affiliation of Protestant theological education to the Serampore University system helped to remove its isolation from general academic trends in the country. The Committee on Academic Administration of the Senate of Serampore College ensured academic excellence by implementing rigorous rules on staff qualification, use of senate-provided curricula and syllabi, entrance requirements for students, university examinations, etc. Combined programmes with other universities were undertaken, such as the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary's link with the Madurai Kamaraj University at post-graduate level. Ecumenical relations were furthered between the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic sections in the federated schools of theology that developed in various places such as Bangalore, Madras, Kottayam-Trivandrum, Poona, Calcutta and Allahabad.⁸⁴

The emergence of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College brought a wider dimension by bringing non-teaching theological centres into the senate, to add to the contextual development of a relevant theological education. Such institutions were closer to the grassroots problems of the masses, and articulated theology with authentic relevance. They catered for areas of Christian ministry which were less developed within the regular theological curriculum of the senate-affiliated colleges. For example, the Christian Counselling Centre at Vellore offered specialised courses and seminars in Christian counselling, to which several colleges sent their students who were keen on the ministry of counselling, in order for them to acquire expertise in the area of their interest.

Associations for theological teachers, theologically trained women, and theological students, and national consultations and conferences brought together the scattered forces of the church's ministry in India. They were able to develop and reinforce a common vision and theological focus in

⁸⁴ Links between TTS and Madurai Kamaraj University were noted in Chapter 16. On the federated research study programmes that developed, see HS Wilson, "Ecumenical Cooperation in Theological Education in India: A Survey," *AJT*, 2:1, 1988, pp. 38-44.

theological education. Mutual encouragement resulted from these, and they offered a catalytic effect in furthering the development of ministry.

The concern of the Ranson report was with the ordained ministry. But the Harrison study took note of the changing image of ministry and questions of unordained, paid and unpaid ministry. The new colleges of the evangelical brand catered to the unordained paid ministry. External study programme at B.Th. and B.D. levels, extension programmes of the Association for Theological Education by Extension (Bangalore) and Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action (Madurai) provided for unordained unpaid "tent maker" ministry of the laity. The Harrison report referred to the Christu Seva Vidyalaya as a lone programme in the fifties for women. In the eighties, women were found on the increase in theological colleges at B.Th. and B.D. levels, with a steady flow into post-graduate levels both seen and encouraged by the BTESSC and the PTE of the WCC.

During the sixties, lay ministries and lay theological education received much attention. This was in keeping with the worldwide post-Evanston concern for the place of the laity in the church's ministry. During the seventies, social consciousness was heightened with context-oriented theologising. Doing theology in context became the theme of the age. The context of poverty and oppression was taken seriously as a result of consultations such as the one on the church and social justice.⁸⁵ National emergency rule aroused great concern. The need to cooperate with secular and non-Christian social action groups to challenge the power structures and to demand the rights of the oppressed poor, and the need to educate the masses of their rights, were recognised. As a result, community development programmes became a priority in the mission of the church. Hence the eighties began to follow up on the agenda set by the developments of the seventies. The joint council of the CSI, CNI and Mar Thoma Churches and the NCCI furthered this social mission of the church in India.

Theological colleges under the BTESSC responded to this situation by adding new courses in the area of "Church and Society." As we noted, the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary placed students in the actual social settings to sit where the people sit and to experience God and theology in context. The Rural Theological Institute provided the opportunity for combining social awareness and theology in context. BTESSC included

85. See Chapter 15, and the consultation report *Church and Social Justice*, Bangalore: CSI Synod, CISRS, ITS of St. Mark's Cathedral and ECC, 1975.

courses at the M.Th. level in social analysis, in order to train educators for theological schools and churches.

The same period saw a strengthening of evangelical theological education through the formation of new colleges and structures. Whereas a separatist tendency was exhibited in several of them, the BTESSC continued to keep an ecumenical openness towards them. There is definite need for the holistic development of theological education in India by combining the emphases of evangelization and nation building. The two should go together. Alien influences that polarise must be put away.

One major area of clarity in eliminating the polarisation is that of clarifying the Christian attitude to other religions. As noted already, though there are developments in the area of dialogue, sufficient work has not been done at the grassroots level to educate the laity on their attitude to other faiths and ideologies. Dialogue remains at the academic level among the intelligentsia. Hence, going beyond the false assumption that the Indian Christian church which dwells in a religiously plural setting has much to teach others about mission in the religiously plural setting, the Indian church has to make progress in this area of her own self understanding. The departments of religion in the BTESSC colleges need strengthening.

A significant factor that cannot be omitted is that of faculty development. From the time of the Ranson study, this received careful consideration. The Theological Education Fund and churches abroad provided the needed scholarship funds for post-graduate study of faculty members, both within India and abroad. During the mid-eighties, the Registrar of Serampore College reported a healthy situation, wherein most of the Serampore-affiliated colleges were staffed by qualified Indian nationals, with only a negligible number of expatriate missionary teachers in them. Of the 237 teachers in the 19 colleges that his report covered, there were only 30 overseas teachers, of whom only 9 were full-time teachers.

Full time teachers	:	Indian	160
		Overseas	9
Part time teachers	:	Indian	42
		Overseas	21
Other resource staff		Indian	5
Total for the 19 colleges			237 ⁸⁶

86. The registrar, DS Sathyaranjan, served the BTESSC from its Serampore office. See his paper "Sharing of and Planning for Resources: A Survey (Theological Education in India)," *AJT*, 2:1, 1988, pp. 62-64.

The national study of theological education by the commission on priorities reported certain discriminations that existed based on sex and social background. It noted the exorbitant male-domination in the teaching faculty and the under-representation of various social groups in theological faculties. For instance, backward castes and higher castes were found in greater numbers at post-graduate levels, whereas scheduled tribes and Dalits were found at lower academic levels, both as students and as teachers. A corrective measure was proposed and initiated by the BTESSC in the mid-eighties.⁸⁷

The registrar, DS Sathyanarjan, also reported a steady increase of students at all levels, and enhancement of library and campus facilities, funds and church cooperation.⁸⁸ In 1987, the BTESSC resolved to set up a "solidarity fund" and solicited contributions from overseas ecumenical partners. Such financial dependence hinders "economic viability in

87. See Chapter 14 on these discriminations. Cf. the reports of the national study, "Study of Theological Teachers in India," *RS*, XXIV:2, June 1987; "Theologically Trained Women," *RS*, XXXI:3, September 1984, pp. 3-26; also its earlier mimeographed preliminary report, 1983.

88. See DS Sathyanarjan, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55, 60f on students; pp. 56f, 62-64 on finances and pp. 57f on library developments. The increase in the number of graduates for the sixteen years between 1971 and 1986 as listed by him:

	B.Th.	B.D.	M.Th.	D.Th.
1971.	x	62	3	x
1972.	27	79	8	1
1973.	112	71	16	x
1974.	173	96	7	1
1975.	158	130	10	x
1976.	188	131	13	5
1977.	139	170	14	x
1978.	137	150	11	2
1979.	168	280	10	x
1980.	159	312	18	x
1981.	174	257	16	x
1982.	184	305	22	2
1983.	178	279	18	1
1984.	170	283	24	x
1985.	180	280	35	1
1986.	279	306	24	2

The linguistic distribution of such qualified people at the post-graduate level was Assamese (1), Kuki (3), Oriya (6), Bengali (5), Lushai (4), Santali (3), Garo (1), Malayalam (81), Tamil (62), Gujarati (7), Marathi (7), Telugu (37), Hindi (11), Mizo (5), Urdu (5), Kannada (29), Naga (8), Khasi (7), Nepali (1).

89. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

context." This is another major area of corrective development for the future. But, as set within a poorer nation which itself draws from the international community and the richer nations, the achieving of total financial self-sufficiency will be a Herculean task for the church in India. Rightly did the registrar resound the call to further continuation and growth in cooperation, support and trust, on regional, national and global levels.⁸⁹

We conclude our study affirming that Indian theological education has made definite progress during the period of our study in the areas of indigenous theology, contextual mission and relevant ministries, achieving national togetherness and ecumenical cooperation. A curbing of alien polarisations, an enhancement of grassroots level understanding of the Christian attitude to other faiths and ideologies, and a correction of social and sex discrimination would further the effectiveness of Indian theological education for the future.

ÉPILOGUE

Missiological Education in India from 1987 to the Present

A clear account of developments after 1987 needs to be researched into and written in a full form. But in this epilogue, we shall attempt to summarise a few major developments and trends.

1. Developments within the Serampore Family

During the period between 1987 and 2005, the number of colleges affiliated with the Senate of Serampore College (SSC) increased to 45, and several more colleges await affiliation. Most of these operated at Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Divinity levels. Only at United Theological College (UTC), Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture (FFRRC), Gurukul Lutheran Theological College (GLTC), North India Institute for Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS), Eastern Theological College (ETC), Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) and recently at Aizawl Theological College (ATC), there exists master level study prospect.

a) Post Graduate level missiological education at Master of Theology level

Missiological education was not a separate entity within the Serampore family for a long time. Missiology was considered as part of theology. But the argument in favour of a separate department for missiology was mooted from the evangelical community, led by the Union Biblical Seminary. Hence, in 1992, a Master of Theology in missiology was offered at UBS with the approval of the Senate of Serampore College. F Hrangkhuma was the first architect of the courses to be taught, and wrote the syllabii as he started pioneering and shaping the program. But by 1994 he left UBS, and Siga Arles helped to continue the department as a visiting professor. In 1996 students were enrolled for M.Th. in missiology at NIIPGTS of Serampore College in collaboration with Bishop's College at Kolkata. In 1999 both United Theological College and Gurukul Lutheran Theological College opened missiology departments to offer "Mission and Ecumenics" and "Mission and Interfaith Dialogue," respectively. But

there was no separate doctoral program in missiology offered under the Senate of Serampore College.

The staff situation was bleak in all the above centres. UBS discontinued the M.Th. in missiology with SSC for lack of teachers; but resumed it under ATA accreditation from 2001. NIIPGTS could not enroll students after 2002 and UTC stopped intake of students from 2004. GLTC heavily depends on expatriate help. Gospel for Asia Biblical Seminary at Tiruvalla started offering M.Th. in missiology under both SSC and ATA from 2004. It relies on visiting faculty members to sustain the program.

b) Post Graduate Doctoral Level Missiological Education

One could find a lack of sustainability of M.Th. level missiological education, because there was no plan to produce teachers at the doctoral level. The South Asia Institute of Theological Research, which was the national centre for doctoral studies in the SSC, did not offer a Doctor of Theology in missiology. If such an offer would have existed, then graduates of it could have helped sustain the M.Th. level programmes in missiology. This one national centre was revised and decentralized in 1999 with the development of four doctoral centres in the country: United Theological College (Bangalore), Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture (FFRRC, Kottayam), North India Institute for Post Graduate Theological Studies (Kolkata) and Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Centre (Chennai). SATHRI continues to be the coordinating body with direct enrollment and supervision of candidates in those disciplines which are unavailable at the four centres. Both NIIPGTS and UTC applied for permission to register doctoral students in missiology during 2002, but failed to enroll students. Hence, the future of specialized higher education in missiology in the Senate of Serampore College will continue to be weak unless a clear plan emerges within its Committee for Academic Administration.

2. Developments within the Asia Theological Association

During the eighties and nineties, ATA grew strong numerically as many colleges began to enter it and get accredited at the diploma, bachelor and master levels. All identified themselves as "evangelical" and "mission oriented."

a) SAIACS operated as a centre for mission studies from 1982. But by the turn of the century, it appeared a typical theological college with all departments and hence is no more a specialized centre for mission studies. Here one could obtain a Doctor of Missiology or a Ph.D. in missiology.

b) Asian Graduate School of Theology was set up under the ATA to provide for M.Th. studies and to explore into doctoral work. But the program proved unsustainable.

c) Asian Institute of Theology has begun to offer extension and external M.Th. and Ph.D. study options to a wide variety of people.

d) Only SAIACS and AIT offer doctoral study beside Masters.

e) M.Th. in missiology is offered from HBI (1999), COTR (2000), UBS (2001) and GFABS (2004) under ATA accreditation.

f) A consultation called by Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission brought together 25 representatives of mission societies, colleges and missiological study centres in March 1999. They proposed the need to start a Ph.D. program in missiology to equip faculty members who shall then sustain the M.Th. programs. A working committee was named (Partnership in Missiological Education) which planned the structure, curriculum and budget for such a new program. As a result the Consortium for Indian Missiological Education (CIME) was established in 2000 and inaugurated on 11 June 2002 with 5 scholars enrolled for Ph.D. in missiology. This faculty development programme aims to produce those teachers with Ph.D. qualification who shall sustain the Master level programs and thus develop a continuum for the future of missiology in the evangelical colleges. (The author currently serves as the Dean of this program.)

Thus within the ATA family of colleges, there is a commitment to developing faculty to sustain missiological education. Yet, the programs are recent, the numbers produced are minimal and there is a heavy dependence on expatriate help.

3. Developments within the Indian Institute of Missiology

The mushrooming of indigenous mission societies in India resulted in the formation of the India Missions Association in 1977. Various attempts were made to cater for training missionaries and mission leaders. The Indian Institute of Cross Cultural Communication, the Yavatmal College of Leadership Training and the Centre for Mission Studies (at Union Biblical Seminary) were significant. Individual mission societies had their own mission training programs, such as, the Bethel Bible Institute, Outreach Training Institute, etc. The IMA felt the need for strengthening mission training and hence, twenty years later in 1996 it established the Indian Institute of Missiology. IIM grew strong and now incorporates over 50 mission training centres of India. It has developed a hybrid system wherein it accredits some programs and affiliates suitable colleges and

provides a centralized administration, similar to the SSC, but serves the missionary training institutions.

IIM publishes a *Journal of Indian Missiology* and has developed a Post Graduate Diploma in Missiology (PGDM) to equip the trainers of trainers. Those who already have B.D. or M.Div. are encouraged then to pursue their M.Th. in missiology, gaining credit for the PGDM courses. Since there are not many qualified persons to teach the PGDM courses, the IIM held a national consultation on the future shaping of missiological education for India and resolved to explore initiating doctoral study in missiology. There may be a bright future for missiological education in India under the efforts of IIM.

4. Other developments for Missiological Education:

Several structures which emerged to help either to train or to provide literature have grown through the last two decades. We shall list the significant ones from among them.

1. Centre for Mission Studies at the Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. This centre holds annual conferences every January on relevant themes, inviting a set of resource persons to present papers and interact with the UBS community of teachers and post-graduate students. Papers and reports are then published in collaboration with the ISPCK, Delhi.

2. Fellowship of Indian Missiologists was formed under the initiative of Jacob Kavunkal. It meets annually and all papers presented are published, adding to the collection of missiological literature in India. There are no strict themes each year and it draws mostly Roman Catholic missiologists.

3. Centre for Contemporary Christianity at Bangalore holds seminars on topics related to issues faced in mission. Through its series "Studies in the Gospel interface with Indian Contexts" it publishes books, either fresh writings or Indian reprints of research on Indian themes. Most post-graduate Indian research has been undertaken in the global setting and was published in the West, but is unavailable in India. CFCC ventures to make them available and affordable in India.

4. Haggai Institutes are held all over the nation to bring together laymen and women to equip them for tent making missionary witness. There are many similar ventures such as the Union of Evangelical Students of India, Ravi Zachariah International Ministries, Christian Institute of Management, TRACI and such.

5. Mylapore Institute of Indigenous Studies is an initiative which has attempted to serve the cause of research and compilation of information on indigenous churches of India.

6. Ishvani Kendra at Pune has developed a significant library and research study centre where research scholars can access relevant documents and literature. Their *Ishvani Digest* is helpful for research.

7. Vendrame Publications of Sacred Heart Theological Seminary in Shillong has developed another such research centre and majors in tribal documentation and publication.

8. The Indian Social Institutes at Delhi and Bangalore have resource material to help with social analysis and contemporary information on social evils.

9. Old structures such as the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Ecumenical Christian Centre and colleges such as United Theological College, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and Gurukul Theological College have also continued to produce books and add to the cognitive pursuit for mission in India.

Thus, missiological education is continuing to gather momentum in India. Some identify "poverty" and "religious pluralism" as the two most significant challenges for Christian mission in India. Hence, through the past two decades we have had significant work done in response to these two areas of challenge. Studies in social analysis, economic policies, distributive justice and correctives to the negative impact of multinational and transnational corporations are on the increase. Whereas the church has tried to develop her theology of wider ecumenism, communal harmony and national integration, fundamentalist forces have shaped Islamic and Hindu militancies which have brought about severe tensions in relationships. Religiously motivated persecution had been on the increase. More and more mass destructive efforts, suicidal bombings and international terrorism have been unleashed in the last three decades. It is rather urgent that the church in mission is well equipped with wisdom to offer "good news" to a torn world order.

Others identify the issues of "Dalit liberation", "tribal awakening" and "female emancipation" as the most urgent areas for Christian mission to address. Plenty of academic research as well as field studies are being done to tackle these areas. The evangelicals rally with the World Evangelical Alliance and Lausanne Movement (and its off-shoot the AD 2000 and Transformation Movements), pursuing to study "unreached people groups, strategies and methods of outreach, and church planting patterns." The ecumenical concern continues to intensify its study of issues connected with the process of nation building. In this setting, the large topics of interest are "globalization, economic policies and

international relations." Studies in these areas are progressing steadily and are adding more and more literary input for future scholars who should equip themselves with information and provide new initiatives for the church in mission into the future.

An increase of the communalization of politics and the misuse of religion in politics have brought about strong opposition to the constitutional right of freedom for the practice and propagation of one's faith and for conversion. This has raised severe questions on the shape of the church for the future. "Churchless Christianity" is explored by many. Instead of coming out of the Hindu or Muslim communities, the question now asked loud and clear is: "could followers of Christ remain within their social structures and communities and still be disciples of Christ and members of the body of Christ?" Christ Bhaktas and Isais are on the increase and a theology for this is being put together by the efforts of many. A "Rethinking Forum" has been pursuing this path and is beginning to gather momentum. Rather than the kind of huge church buildings with steeples and domes as the colonial mission era had given to us, a search for New Testament types of house churches, cell groups, and basic ecclesial communities are being explored by concerned individuals. The organized church that is the mainstream church feels threatened by the new churches and the new initiatives. As John Stott says, the largest challenge for us in theological pursuit is ecclesiology – "the most neglected area of theology." We need clarity on our concept and understanding of the church and her shape. Missiological education in India needs to explore into this arena sharply and thus help the church in fulfilling her mission.

Jesus Christ has said in no uncertain terms: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (NIV). The Good News Edition reads: "not even death will ever be able to overcome it." The task of the missiologist is to assist in this building up of the church, to enhance the reign of God in all the world and to impact the human community with goodwill and peace and thus bring glory to God. Missiological education has a challenging agenda and relevance and will continue to thrive, grow and serve God, church and human community in India until the return of the Lord of all ages. There is much hope for missiological education in the Indian setting.

APPENDIX

The Influence of the Theological Education Fund on Indian Theological Education

The earlier missionary movement and its successor, the ecumenical movement, both regarded theological education and ministerial training "as being central to the life and witness of the Churches."¹ Protestant missions trained indigenous ministry right from the start, as we note from Tranquebar missionaries in 1715.² William Carey stressed the necessity of having an educated, indigenous clergy and hence established his Serampore College already in 1818.³ Numerous colleges developed and trained ministry in India, as we note elsewhere in this thesis. But when the World Missionary Conference met at Edinburgh in 1910, it was recognised that theological education was the least important topic in missionary budgets.⁴ Rather than advancing in indigenous typology in ministerial training, the churches and missions settled to an importation of the Western type of theological education, using English language and books. The World Missionary Conference "only hinted at what form the development of ministerial training in the younger churches should actually take," but did not work out a common plan.⁵ Between the years 1910 and 1928, greater emphasis was placed on furthering general education in the mission fields. The 1928 conference of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem noted that more money was spent to send Western missionaries than to produce more indigenous clergy.⁶

1. Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry: A Study of the Work of the Theological Education Fund*, Madras: CLS for PTE/WCC, 1981, p. ix.

2. See Arno Lehmann, *It Began at Tranquebar*, translated by MJ Lutz, Madras: CLS, 1956.

3. See George Howells, *The Story of Serampore and its College*, Serampore 1927, p. 16; DA Christudas, "The Story of Serampore College, 1818-1929" in Wilma Stewart (ed.), *The Story of Serampore and its College*, Serampore, 1960.

4. See reports of WMC, Edinburgh, 1910.

5. Lienemann-Perrin, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

This inadequacy of theological training of the pastors of the younger churches was recognised further by the 1938 IMC conference at Tambaram, which set up the structures for several detailed studies of ministerial training in younger churches.⁷ Such studies carried out between the years 1941–57 were forerunners leading to the formation of a special Theological Education Fund under the IMC at its conference at Ghana in 1958, under the leadership of its secretary, Charles W. Ranson. The purpose was to make grants to aid and to encourage the development and strengthening of indigenous theological education and theological thinking; and the provision of a higher standard of scholarship and training suitable to the needs of the churches. Christine Lienemann-Perrin in her account outlines the history, programme and effectiveness of this Theological Education Fund and rightly titles her study: *Training for a Relevant Ministry*.⁸ The Ghana assembly sanctioned the starting of the new fund and programme based on the four million US dollars that eight different American mission boards were raising and the matching contribution that Rockefeller promised.⁹

During its first mandate period (1958–1965) under the leadership of CW Ranson, TEF gave major grants to 27 institutions scattered throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America, Central America, Pacific Islands and the Near East.¹⁰ Noting that on an average US theological school library had twenty-two times more books than schools in the third world, TEF funded schemes to enable theologians in twenty three different languages to write or translate theological works.¹¹ TEF saw theological education as a vital force in world evangelism and the theological training of the ministry as a matter of first priority.¹² Hence it sought to discover a new and adventurous theological education. The first mandate specially attempted to raise the quality and scientific standards of theological education, and focused on the "indigenisation" process of theology and theological education: "The strengthening of indigenous ministerial education." This involved the strengthening of academic competence, the strengthening of the student community by raising entrance requirements, curriculum re-

7. *Ibid.*, p 7. These studies included Bengt Sundkler's *Christian Ministry in Africa*; Charles Ranson's *Christian Minister in India*; Wilfred Schopel's *The Christian Ministry in Latin America and the Caribbean*; Douglas Webster's *Survey of the Training of the Ministry in the Middle East*, etc.

8. Lienemann-Perrin, *op.cit.*, pp 15ff.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, pp 33ff describes the first mandate of TEF.

11. *Ibid.*, p 67.

12. *Ibid.*, pp 85 and 89.

visions, improvement of teaching methods, dialogue with contemporary educationalists and the strengthening of the Christian community in the theological training centres.¹³

Such indigenization meant that "in the theological schools in India such subjects as history, culture and Indian languages and music should also be taught," promoting a real and living dialogue between the church and its environment and an increased use of the vernacular.¹⁴ Indigenization meant de-Westernisation and creativity in theological thinking. In promoting such indigenization,

TEF was oriented to the elite in its working style and strategy; it expected the incentives for the innovation and improvement of ministerial training in the younger churches to come from the elites.¹⁵

Elite here meant the theological educators and theologians of the younger churches. They were expected to be released from dependence on missionary models and to adapt to educational style, academic organization, training and thinking habits of their countries¹⁶ and to do their own academic theological work on an equal level and to lead the churches. However, the stress in indigenization was on personnel rather than thought. Conservative evangelicals cooperated in the TEF venture until 1961, but when the IMC merged with the World Council of Churches and TEF came under the WCC, they began to support the Theological Assistance Programme of the World Evangelical Fellowship. There was hardly any dialogue between them and the TEF.¹⁷

Through its grants to enable the production of vernacular theological text books, TEF during the first mandate already helped to liberate theological education in the Third World from Western dominance.¹⁸ TEF expected to assist the publication of 50 basic text books as indigenous, vernacular works consisting of

1 Grammar of New Testament Greek, 1 Greek dictionary, 1 Bible concordance, 1 Bible dictionary, 1 one-volume Bible commentary, 1 Hebrew grammar, 1 Hebrew dictionary, 1 Bible atlas, 1 atlas of church history and 1 optional book; 1 general introduction to OT, 1 history of Israel, 4 commentaries on selected texts (NT as for OT), church history

13. *Ibid.*, pp 113f.

14. *Ibid.*, p 108.

15. *Ibid.*, p 122.

16. *Ibid.*, p 120.

17. *Ibid.*, p 122.

18. *Ibid.*, p 117.

(1 survey, 1 history of a particular region, 1 detailed work on a particular period of church history), 1 collection of original documents, 1 book of ecumenics on doctrine and history of doctrines, 2 compendiums of Christian theology, 1 history of doctrine, 2 studies of selected themes, 1 book on history of religion, 1 book on philosophy, 1 book on philosophy of religion, 1 to 3 books on Christian ethics in the local situation and social change and other urgent problems of the area, practical theology, at least 8 books covering the following subjects – pastoral ministry, psychology, practice of prayer, worship, evangelization, Sunday schools, preaching, comparative ecclesiology, sick visitation and youth work.¹⁹

The Board of Theological Education of the NCCI coordinated the textbook production in 11 languages of India. By 1974 six of them reported:²⁰

Language	Published books	Books being planned/prepared
Bengali	27 (10 originals)	25 (some originals)
Hindi	30 (17 originals)	32 (24 originals)
Lushai	14 (6 originals)	11 (8 originals)
Malayalam	34 (25 originals)	34 (34 originals)
Tamil	55 (45 originals)	7 (6 originals)
Telugu	33 (15 originals)	17 (6 originals)

Major grants were given to United Theological College (\$123,000), Serampore College and Senate (\$110,250), Andhra Christian Theological College (\$50,820) and Tamilnadu Theological College (\$63,000). India was well represented on the TEF advisory group by Bishop John W Sadiq of Nagpur, David Moses of Hislop College, Robert Clark of the BTE-NCCI and Bishop Newbigin. Sadiq recommended vernacular theological education. He was afraid that "the pattern of ministry in India" was "far too Western" and degree oriented. He warned it would continue so unless the large grants of TEF were given on specific conditions to ensure desired changes.²¹ DG Moses proposed complete reforming of the curriculum of ministerial training as the only way to "achieve the cultural, religious and social awareness required by an academically competent indigenous

19. *Ibid.*, p 76.

20. *Ibid.*, p 77. Cf TEF Archives: A report of the Southern Asia Theological Textbooks Programme to the TEF Committee, June 1974.

21. See John W Sadiq, "The Future of the Theological Education Fund", TEF Archives, WCC, Geneva, p 3. Sadiq was Bishop of the CNI Nagpur diocese and was a member of the advisory group.

Church" and recommended the use of the vernacular and the teaching of Indian history, culture, music and languages.²²

During the second mandate period (1965-1970) under James F Hopewell, TEF encouraged

Christian community in the ministerial training centres; recruitment of candidates for ministry; continuing education of pastors; graduate study and faculty research; curriculum reform; associations of theological institutions and improvement of teaching methods.²³

Paul Verghese represented India on the advisory group during this period. Critics of ecclesiastical and cultural colonialism were active, such as Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire; education for liberation, deschooling society and such themes demanded a change of the theological education curriculum.²⁴ Bhasker Sojwal pointed out that Indian clergy who made up less than 1% of the Indian Christian church had over 33 ministerial training centers, whereas the majority laity had none open to them.²⁵ Ministry developed in Western churches and imbibed in Indian churches was rigidly "ordained clergy/minister oriented", contrary to "the diversity and institutional flexibility of the ministry in the New Testament". There was insufficient room for laity, team ministries and part-time ministries. During this period we note a change in the understanding of ministry, a survey of which from all parts of the world is found in a WCC study report by Steven G Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry: Theological Education in a Changing World* and David Paton's *New Forms of Ministry*.²⁶ Economically and socially viable new forms of ministry were developing in the Third World, with a third of the candidates for ministerial training preparing for something other than ordained ministry. A high percentage of clergy in the third world countries supplemented their salary with a secular sideline and served as part-time ministers, unlike those in the

22. Lienemann-Perrin, *op.cit.*, p 108.

23. *Ibid.*, p 127.

24. For the influence of the Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire, see his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London 1970, *Cultural Action for Freedom*, London 1972, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, New York, 1973, *Education: the Practice of Freedom*, 1976. See Ivan Illich's *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution*, New York, 1970 and *Deschooling Society*, New York, 1971.

25. Bhasker Sojwal was a CNI pastor who served with the BTE of NCCI and later became the executive director of World Vision of India. His comment is quoted in Lienemann-Perrin, *op.cit.*, p 141.

26. London 1969 and 1965 respectively. Paton's study was published as a CWME Research Pamphlet, no. 12.

European and American settings. The "dialectic between universal technological civilization and local cultural situations"²⁷ was taken seriously by the advisory group guiding TEF during this period. In 1968 WCC set up its office of education with three sections: general, Christian and theological; and in 1973 the programme unit on "Education and Renewal" took charge of "General and Christian Education, Family Desk, Laity Concerns, Adult Education and Scholarships" and "Women's Desk, Youth Work" and *Risk*.²⁸ Yet away from Geneva, TEF continued to serve from London, moving into its next phase.

Whereas during the first mandate period only 6% of all the projects were concerned with encouraging graduate study (i.e., \$175,000), the second mandate allocated 37% (\$1,129,294) for this purpose.²⁹ The two together gave grants for 98 doctoral, 87 M.Th. and B.D., 80 research scholarships and 87 grants for guest lecturers and exchanges of professors, a total of 352 scholarships to enhance faculty development in Third World theological institutions.

During its third mandate period (1970-77) TEF took the vague guidelines given by the advisory group during the late sixties and under the heading *contextualization* developed specific plans. Contextualization

meant all that is implied in the familiar term "indigenization" and yet seeks to press beyond. Contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of Third World contexts. Indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the gospel in terms of a traditional culture. Contextualization, while not ignoring this, takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical movement of nations in the Third World.³⁰

For two years TEF directors Shoki Coe, Aharon Sapsezian and James Bergquist "travelled a great deal, participated in numerous consultations and conferences on theological education, and studied literature on educational reforms all over the world" and developed a new working policy.³¹ 700 projects were given help with grants totalling about

27. See the discussion on this in Lienemann Perrin, *op.cit.*, pp 143ff and 174ff.

28. WB Kennedy, Paulo Freire and W Simpfendorfer were the directors of the three sections of the office of education during the second mandate period.

29. On TEF investments on higher education scholarships during this period, see *ibid.*, p 128.

30. Lienemann-Perrin, *op.cit.*, pp 174f.

31. *Ibid.*, p 173

\$3,600,000 in these areas:

1. Centres of advanced study. 2. Renewal within existing institutions.
3. Extension education. 4. Alternative forms of theological education.
5. Faculty development. 6. Associations of theological schools.
7. Improvement of teaching methods. 8. Educational media. 9. Study, conferences and consultations.³²

Faculty development was a high priority. With a \$300,000 one-time grant from the American Lilly Endowment Inc., "for theological education by extension and other alternative patterns in Latin America", TEF set up a special commission for theological education by extension.

Contextualization of theological education was anticipated on four levels by TEF: missiological, structural, theological and pedagogical; aiming at the "renewal and reform of the churches, development of human potential and the realization of justice" in terms of mission; developing of theological education structures which correspond with the socio-economic conditions of the area; relating theologically the task of proclamation to the most urgent tasks of the church in the area; overcoming elitist and authoritarian attitudes in the educative process, turning it into a liberating and creative force and merging academic study and practice into one approach.³³ TEF published the proposal for the strategy of TEF for this period in *Ministry in Context*, a collection of essays on models and alternative concepts in education in *Learning in Context*, and made an empirical analysis of the financial situation of the ministerial training centres in the younger churches in Herbert M Zorn's *Viability in Context*.³⁴ Zorn made an in-depth study of 33 representative institutions in the Third World based on a voluminous questionnaire. The study took note of the size of the institutions, the number of students and teachers (national and expatriate), size of the churches, annual expenditure, full cost per student, percentage of revenue from fees, endowment, government/university and other local sources and foreign contributions. Zorn noted that of all the institutions in India the Mar Thoma Syrian Church's theological seminary was the best example of a self-supporting institution with 96% of its support coming from within India and 4% from Mar Thoma Christians abroad.

India was represented on the TEF committee during this period by Samuel Amirtham, the first principal of the ecumenical Tamilnadu

32. *Ibid.*, pp 176f.

33. *Ibid.*, p 175.

34. *Ibid.*, pp 184-188.

Theological Seminary, at Madurai, as well as James Bergquist and PT Chandi. Amirtham took the influences of TEF into his seminary and led an authentic experiment on contextually relevant theological education for India, which is discussed in Chapter 16. His own developments and insights that he brought into the TEF stream took him to serve the Programme for Theological Education, initially as associate and later as its director, when TEF came to an end in July 1977 and PTE was formed as a sub-unit under the WCC programme unit on Faith and Witness.

TEF during its twenty years from 1958 to 1977 made possible a community for ecumenical dialogue amongst all branches of the Protestant and Orthodox churches, creating a spirit of willingness to learn together, attending to both the universality and particularity of the church and her ministry, led by an ecumenical composition of staff and committee. By the end TEF found representative theologians of the younger churches in its leadership, planning the projects and priorities and "educating" the donor mission agencies and organizations as to the direction of contextually relevant ministry and ministerial formation. TEF's significance to worldwide developments in ministerial formation cannot be ignored, and it is continued through its successor, the Programme on Theological Education. Whereas TEF was initially a programme of the IMC, when IMC amalgamated with the WCC in 1961, it became a part of the activities of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). But in July 1977 TEF came to an end and PTE was formed as a sub-unit under the WCC programme unit on Faith and Witness. PTE inherited some of the unfinished tasks of the TEF: the six-continent approach and the responsibility of regional bodies for planning projects and programmes. With the leadership of Aharon Sapsezian, Ross Kinsler, Samuel Amirtham, John Pobee, Ofelia Ortega and others, PTE continues to assist the cause of relevant theological education on a global scale.

TEF certainly helped developments in Indian Christian theology and Indian theological education. Its grants helped improve the libraries of the Serampore family of colleges and provided scholarships for staff development as well as helped in literature production. CISRS and its literature, including *Religion and Society* and the text book programme, were enabled through TEF grants. Its consultations provided fresh insight and relevant vision in theological education. The most appealing example, that of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, was outlined in Chapter 16.

"The book, originally a 1990 doctoral dissertation at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, is an impressive documentation on the development of mission theology and theological education in general among the Protestant Christians during the post-independence period till 1987. A rare and wholesome feature of the book is that it goes beyond the ecumenical/evangelical divide with Protestant Christianity in India and tries to stand by the "indivisibility of the ecumenical and evangelical commitments within the church" ... pointing out both the nobler and unholy elements on the two sides of the divide. ... great admiration I have for the extensive research the author has made in presenting the Indian churches with this extremely useful assessment of their role in theological education."

J Rosario Narchison
India Church History Review, 1993.

"The book under review is the most comprehensive survey of developments in India since independence in both theology and theological education that this reviewer has seen. Certainly one of the most valuable aspects of this is the inclusion of substantial descriptive and analytical material on the evangelical involvement in theologizing and theological education in India ... Indeed, the entire book is in a sense an apology for radical evangelicalism. All in all, Siga Arles has made a valuable contribution to the study of his subject."

Frederick S Downs
 United Theological College, Bangalore
International Bulletin of Missionary Research, January 1994, pp34-35.



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